



February 2007 Rs. 15/-

# CHANDAMAMA

MANDU FALLS  
TO MUGHALS

(Page 20)

MAHE...

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- What has 'pygg' to do with money?
- Why is the star-fruit so called?
- The Kerala tribe called Kurichiyar is associated with India's 'fight' for freedom. What is the relationship?
- Which is the world's first bridge that carried people and traffic on a high-suspended gondola?
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## **A CALL TO RIGHT-THINKING PEOPLE**

**T**owards the end of the year, tragedy struck several homes in NOIDA, near Delhi, where as many as 38 children between 2 and 11 had become victims of a serial killer, and in one home in Chennai where a 11-year-old boy had been done to death by young men. In the case of the serial killer, there could not have been any specific motive, except probably the pleasure of killing. In Chennai, the youth who made a naive attempt to get ransom money were planning for a new year bash!

Obliquely, the abettors of such crimes are the print media which gives a kind of coverage which is really un-called for and the electronic media—especially the TV—which telecasts movies and serials which provide "action" that attracts imitation. Some responsibility has to be borne by the new trends in marketing in which the glamour factor influences human mind.

In Chennai, the police claim success in nabbing the youth in less than 48 hours, whereas the reports from NOIDA till now allege police inaction-cum-lethargy. That the incidents had taken place next to our national capital and in a metro paint the police in no glorious colours, as they had failed to prevent the crimes.

The other aspect is, such incidents are happening in civilised societies. The question is, are the parents taking adequate care of their children, and giving them enough protection from danger to limbs and life? There is a wide gap between the haves and the have-nots in a "developing" nation like India. The reason is personal greed. The urgent need is to bridge the gap.

We call upon right-thinking men and women of the country to reform individuals—their character and behaviour—so that the nation can enjoy peace and prosperity.

To escape criticism do nothing,  
say nothing, be nothing.  
Victory is a matter of staying power.

**-Elbert Hubbard**

Justice, I firmly believe, is so subtle a thing that to interpret  
it, one has only need of a heart.

**-Jose Garcia Oliver**

Conduct is three-fourths of our life and its largest concern.

**- Mathew Arnold**

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**By e-mail from Niranjan Ray:**

*Chandamama* is my favourite magazine. It is very nice, pictureful, and knowledgeable. I wish every member of *Chandamama* a very happy new year.

# MAIL BAG

**Reader Geetanjali writes from Hyderabad:**

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama* for the past one year. I like all the pages of the magazine. I liked "A grateful servant," "In search of the valley of death", and the Jataka tale. Arabian Nights and Garuda are superb. This magazine has improved my English. It would be good if you print the meanings of difficult words and give simple recipes which we children can attempt to make.

**By e-mail from Prachetosh, Cuttack:**

*Chandamama* has improved my English a lot. When I was 10, I started reading the magazine and realised its greatness. The magazine is very helpful for developing communicating skills. Arabian Nights and the Akbar-Birbal stories are very entertaining. It would be nice if you include a regular page for Sports.

**Reader Sonalika Ningombam of Manipur writes:**

I have become a regular reader of *Chandamama*. It is a great magazine. My cousins introduced me to this magazine. My favourites are Vikram-Vetal stories, Kaleidoscope, Fearless Four and Science Fair. Please publish more such stories.

**This came from Dipankar Dutta of New Delhi:**

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama* and do not miss even a single issue. The magazine is doing a good job to arouse children's reading habit. It is a constant source of entertainment. I have inspired my friends to read this wonderful magazine.

**G.Shanmugapriya of Mangadu, Chennai, writes:**

I am reading *Chandamama* for the past two years. It is a treasure-house of knowledge. I am very much attracted by "Laugh till you drop". I subscribe to several magazines, but *Chandamama* is the best of all.





NEW TALES  
OF KING  
VIKRAM AND  
THE VETALA

# THE SANDALWOOD DOLL

**T**he cremation ground presented an eerie spectacle on that dark night. The moon was hidden behind the clouds, and it was drizzling intermittently. The pitch darkness was relieved only by occasional flashes of lightning that lit up the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally, a jackal's spine-chilling howl or the blood-curdling laughter of some invisible evil spirit cut into the silence that hung like a shroud over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that would strike terror into the bravest heart. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the gnarled tree from which the ancient corpse was hanging. Bones crunched under his feet, and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched determinedly ahead.

Oblivious to everything but the mission at hand, he brought the hanging corpse down by cutting the rope with his sword. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O king! To succeed in one's mission, one needs not only perseverance and the will to work hard (both of which you seem to possess in abundance), but also luck on one's side. However, it is occasionally seen that some people, despite having all the three, soon after achieving their mission foolishly throw away that very thing which they had slogged to attain! I hope you do not do the same. As an example, let me tell you the story of Dileep of Saketpuri."

The tale the vampire narrated went as follows.

Dileep was the son of a farmer of Saketpuri – a village that was part of the estates of the *zamindar* of Shringvar.



Dileep was not interested in agriculture. But he was a talented craftsman, with a flair for making handicrafts of all kinds. In his skilful hands, a lump of clay would turn into a beautiful doll, and a stick of bamboo into a flute, in a matter of minutes. His artistic creations were modelled on nature. He was an entirely self-taught craftsman.

The *zamindar*'s only daughter, Malavika, would turn eighteen that year, and her father decided to celebrate her birthday in a grand manner. He issued a proclamation inviting all his tenants with their families to the function.

The people of Saketpuri wanted to present something unique and memorable to their *zamindar*'s daughter on the occasion. They called on Dileep and requested him to use his skills to craft a very special item.

After some deliberation, Dileep decided that a sandalwood throne would be the best gift. The sandalwood was procured the very next day, and he started work. Exquisitely carved swans formed the armrests of the throne, while its legs were shaped like dancing girls. The throne was adorned with delicate filigree work and studded with colourful semi-precious stones. There was no doubt that it was a work of art.

After completing the throne, Dileep found that he had some sandalwood left over. He began carving idly on it and fashioned it into a doll in the form of a beautiful girl. The doll took on the features of the girl of his dreams. He draped it in silken garments and adorned it with pretty ornaments.

The people of Saketpuri were wonderstruck on seeing the magnificent throne crafted by Dileep, and showered fulsome praise on him. The throne was taken to Shringvar and duly presented to Malavika at the function. She was thrilled by the unique present, and wanted to meet the person who had made it. The *zamindar* sent for Dileep.

When Dileep arrived in response to the summons, he had the sandalwood doll with him. Malavika took one look at the doll and fell in love with it.

"Father, I want that lovely doll for myself!" she declared.

"Forgive me, sir," said Dileep firmly, "but I've made it for my personal satisfaction. I want to keep it for myself."

The *zamindar* said, "I shall give you a good price for it. Just tell me how much you want. Money is not a problem here."

But Dileep stuck to his guns. "My lord, this doll is my very life. There's no question of parting with it at any price!"

"How can this lifeless doll be your 'life'? I'll make you a handsome offer. If you like, you can take this Malavika in exchange for it!" spoke up Malavika, who had been smitten by the charms of the young artisan.

But Dileep declined the offer, saying, "This doll has been made in the image of the girl of my dreams. I'm looking for a bride like this. So, kindly forgive me. I can't fulfil your wish."

The refusal hurt Malavika's pride. She was furious, but said nothing. Understanding what was going on in his daughter's mind, the *zamindar* said to Dileep, "No doubt you're a craftsman of unparalleled calibre; I congratulate you. Now, I give you six months' time to look for your dream girl. If you find her during this time, well and good. Otherwise, you will have to give the doll to my daughter and do as she says. If you don't, you shall be banished from my estate."

“As you say, sir!” said Dileep quietly and he walked out of the *zamindar*’s bungalow with his doll. He immediately started the search for his dream girl. He wandered from place to place for many weeks, but could not find anyone resembling the doll.

At last, tired and dejected, he reached a forest. As he was making his way through it, he suddenly fainted in sheer exhaustion.

When he came to, he found himself lying on a string cot in a hut. An ordinary-looking girl was by his side. Handing him a glass of water, she said, “I found you lying unconscious in the forest. By the grace of the forest-goddess, you have returned to your senses. Please drink this water, to which lime juice and honey have been added – it will help you recover your strength. I shall call my father.” And she went out.

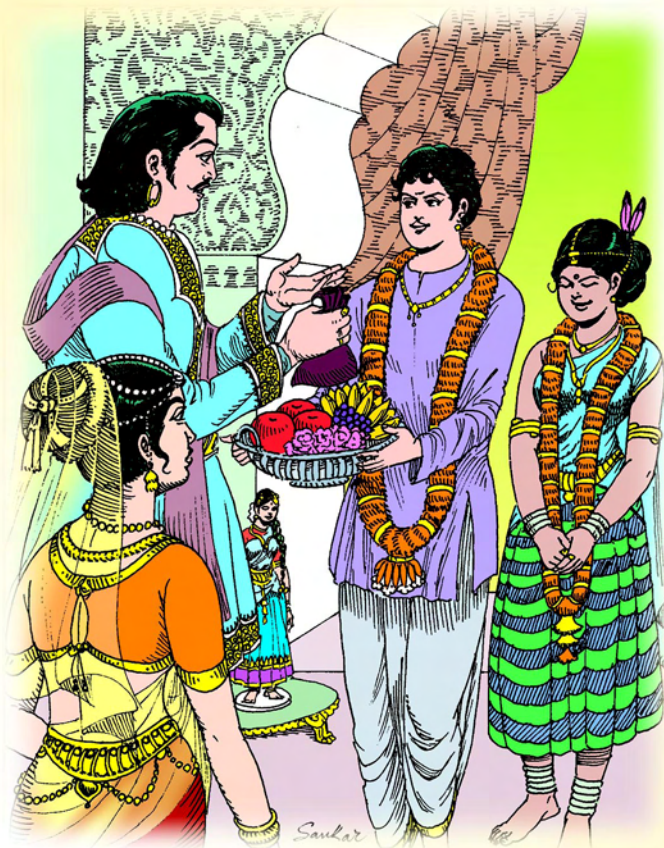
Moments later, she returned with an old man who checked his pulse and said, “*Babuji*, I’m the physician of our tribe. It’s lucky that Mangala here – my daughter – found you when she did. I’ve been treating you with herbal medicines. You’re still quite weak. Rest here for four more days. Mangala will take care of you.” Dileep agreed.

For the next four days, Dileep had ample opportunity to watch Mangala as she went about her work. One day, a leopard that had been wounded by a hunter strayed close to the hut. Dileep watched in astonishment as Mangala cajoled the creature close, washed the wound, tenderly applied a paste of herbs, and bandaged the injured paw.

“It’s a dangerous beast; aren’t you afraid that it will turn upon you and kill you?” he asked.

“No,” she replied smilingly. “It’s dangerous all right; but it kills only when it’s hungry. We have nothing to fear from any jungle beast, provided we approach it with love and kindness.”

On hearing this, Dileep was filled with new respect for Mangala. He observed that she kept herself busy the whole day, doing household chores and helping her father in his work. Often he heard her sing melodiously as she did so. If anyone needed help of any kind, she would be the first to step forward.



On the fourth day, as Dileep prepared to take leave of Mangala, he offered his prized doll to her, saying, “I can never forget the help you gave me when I was in need. Please accept this as a gift from me.”

But Mangala declined politely, saying, “Look after yourself and reach home safe – that’s the best gift you can give me. I pray that you find yourself a wife as beautiful as this doll.” She then gave him a leather pouch filled with forest honey.

“Mangala! Your heart and mind are sweeter than this honey. I wish to make you mine. Will you marry me?” asked Dileep. Mangala blushed and nodded. Dileep then sought her father’s permission.

Within a week, Dileep and Mangala were married. They took leave of Mangala’s father and left the forest.

Instead of returning to his village with his bride, Dileep led her to the *zamindar* at Shringvar and said, “Sir, your daughter had asked for this doll. I am now prepared to give it to her. Please accept it.”

“What price do you want for it?” asked the *zamindar*.

“Nothing. Let it be my present for her,” answered Dileep respectfully.

At that moment, Malavika came in and heard the exchange. “Is this tribal woman your dream girl?” she demanded. “She doesn’t have the faintest resemblance to your doll! Is she more beautiful than me?”

Without waiting for an answer, she turned to the *zamindar* and said, “Father, Dileep has failed the challenge. Take the doll from him and punish him severely!”

The *zamindar* looked keenly at his daughter and then turned to Dileep. He said, “Forgive me, Dileep! I’m ashamed of my daughter’s haughty and arrogant conduct. I’m offering you a thousand gold coins – not as a price for your doll, but as a wedding gift for you. Please accept it!”

Dileep graciously accepted the gift, and left for his village with Mangala.

Concluding the story at this point, the vampire demanded, “O king! For the sake of a mere doll, Dileep turned down the *zamindar*’s beautiful daughter and all her wealth. He then went on to marry a forest girl who had neither good looks nor riches! Was it not utter foolishness on his part? As if that were not enough, instead of taking his bride home to Saketpuri he then went straight to the *zamindar*! What was the need for that? If the *zamindar* had followed his daughter’s advice and awarded some harsh punishment to him, what would have been poor Mangala’s position? From all this, it appears that Dileep was only a gifted artist, with neither intelligence nor common-sense. What do you say? If you know the

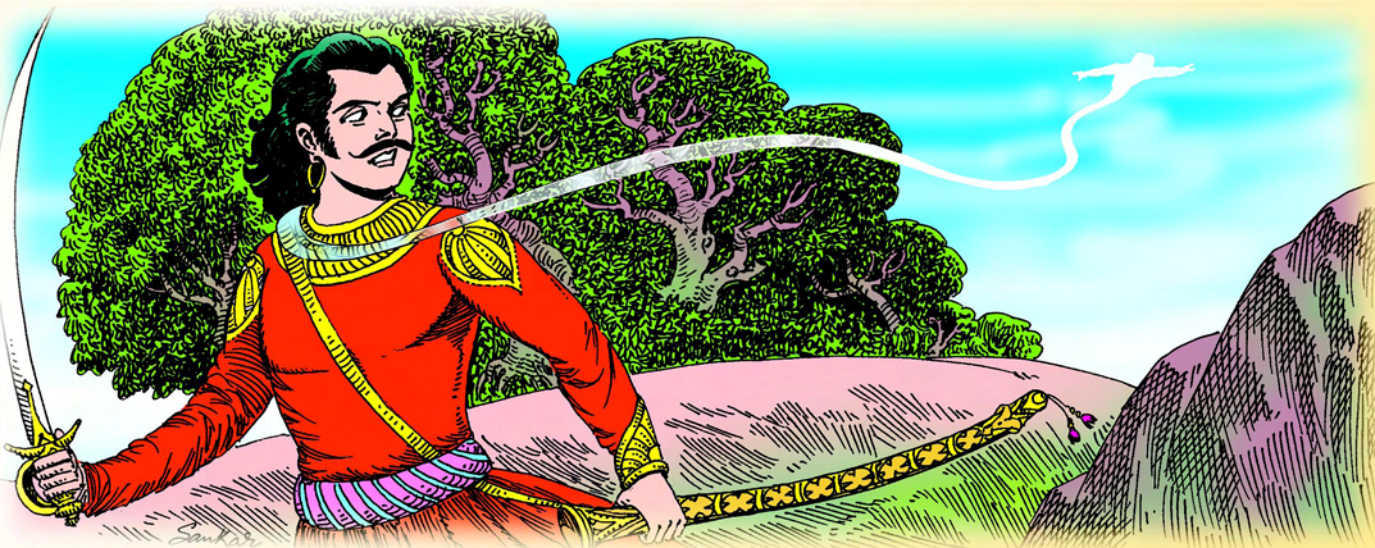
answer, speak out – otherwise, your head shall shatter into a thousand splinters!”

Without hesitation, King Vikram answered, “Dileep was not merely an artist but an intrinsically truthful man. A beautiful appearance alone is not enough; one must also have a beautiful mind. Dileep realised this after meeting the *zamindar*’s daughter. His subsequent meeting with Mangala made him realise that internal beauty is far more important than external beauty. Finding this beauty in her, he married her. A good-looking face pales into insignificance beside a loving heart. A proud and haughty person who is incapable of respecting others is not fit to be called a human being. Malavika was a classic example of such a person.

“Dileep lost interest in his doll when he realised that it too was a beautiful but lifeless creature like her. So he readily gave it away to Malavika who coveted it. His actions cannot be termed foolish. As for his decision to meet the *zamindar* immediately after his marriage, it only reveals his honesty. The *zamindar* understood this, and that is why he apologised to Dileep.”

On hearing this, the vampire nodded in approval, before going off into peal after peal of thunderous laughter. The next moment, he, along with the corpse, moved off the king’s shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the tree.

King Vikram gave a little sigh as he gazed upon the scene. Then, he squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree.





## HE DRAPED GODDESSES IN SARI

**D**o you know that it was the world famous royal painter of Travancore, Raja Ravi Varma, who gave a human face to many of the divine characters of the Hindu pantheon? It came about this way: In 1881, he visited Baroda to attend the coronation of the yuvaraja.

During his 4-month stay there, he painted the portraits of the members of the royal household, besides pictures of Saraswati, Lakshmi, Damayanti, Sita and Sairandhri. Later, he spent a few days in Mumbai when he thought of evolving a common costume for characters from our mythology. Till then, people of India were only familiar with the sculpted figures and those in murals.

Ravi Varma was aware how people had imagined the gods and goddesses to be. He was determined to give them a perfect physical shape and size based on the descriptions in scriptures, epics, and ancient literature. He decided to undertake a tour of India to collect details, which took him to Delhi, Rajputana, Agra, Benares, Gaya, Ayodhya, Mathura, Brindavan, Kanchipuram and other places.

On going back to his palace in Kerala, he painted 14 pictures, like Nala-Damayanti, Krishna-Devaki, Sita swayamvar and disrobing of Draupadi. In all these pictures, he draped the women characters in the sari, which slowly became a national costume as envisaged by him. The sari is often hailed as the most elegant wear for any Indian woman.



## FINDING WORK BY DEMOLITION



**T**he Great (Bada) Imambara in Lucknow is famous for its *Bhul Bhulaiyan*, an intricate labyrinth of galleries (sort of maze). The building was constructed in the wake of a great famine. The Nawab wanted to provide employment to those affected by the famine. He ordered that whatever was constructed during the day be demolished during the night! This deliberate delay in completing the construction was thus a boon to the workmen!



From the pen of  
**RUSKIN BOND**

# THE TREMOR

In the town everyone was talking about the tremor that had just been felt. As there hadn't been any serious damage and nothing big had fallen down, it was all thought to have been great fun. But there were older people who remembered the earthquake of thirty years ago, who had lost friends, relatives and homes when hundreds of houses had fallen down.

They knew that a mild earth tremor was often followed by a second, a more severe shock—and they dreaded this possibility. There was talk of the jail collapsing and the prisoners escaping; of the mighty Brahmaputra changing its course and flooding the whole of Assam, while crocodiles invaded the towns and villages; and of the earth opening up and swallowing the whole of Shillong!

"The end of the world is near!" proclaimed a holy man in the bazaar.

"Tell us, O holy one, what we should do about it," asked a shopkeeper.

"Purify yourself," said the holy man. "Take care of your soul!"

"In other words," said a passing wit, "don't cheat your customers."

"And when did you ever work for a living?" shouted the shopkeeper. "You still owe me twenty rupees!"

Back at the Burman house, the family sat down to a quiet lunch. It wasn't quiet for long, because Dolly wanted what was in Mukesh's plate (though it was no different from hers), and when she was asked to eat her own food, she threw a tantrum.

"These children!" sighed Rakesh, bolting down his rice and bean-curry. "It's time they went to school."

"It's time you got back to school," said Grandmother. "It's half past one."



"We're not having school this afternoon. Although we couldn't get an earthquake holiday, we're going to watch the cricket match. There's a team from Calcutta playing against the Lake Club."

"Take me with you," said Mukesh.

"No, you're always falling off the back of the cycle."

"I'll sit in front, then."

"You'll stay at home," said Grandmother. "Remember, the last time you went to a football match, you got lost."

"But this is a cricket match," argued Mukesh. "No one gets lost at cricket matches."

"Would you like to come with me to the Bengali sweet shop?" asked Grandfather.

"Oh, please," said Mukesh. "It's better than cricket. Better than that rotten bicycle."

"Why do we have earthquakes?" asked Rakesh, changing the topic.

"Well," said Grandfather, "the earth has been around a long time—millions of years—and sometimes it feels the stress and strain of being so old..."

"Are you a million old?" interrupted Mukesh.

"Not yet," said Grandfather, "not yet. But, just like me, the earth wants to stretch a little and yawn, and when it does, the earth's crust has these convulsions—we call them earthquakes."

"But why does it have to stretch here?" asked Rakesh.

"It can stretch anywhere, and it does. Tokyo, San Francisco, Iran, the South Pacific, Italy, Turkey—there's hardly a corner of the earth that hasn't felt an earthquake at some time or the other. Of course, in some places it's worse... This is one of the places where the earth likes to do its stretching."

When lunch was over, Rakesh rode off to the cricket ground, Grandfather and Mukesh walked off in the direction of the bazaar, and Dolly followed Grandmother



into the courtyard to help with the washing. It was about ten minutes later that the real earthquake was felt, and half the town came tumbling down.



Rakesh had almost reached the cricket ground when, all of a sudden, the road tilted and rose up towards him. A second later he found himself sprawling on the ground.

A deep rumbling sound seemed to come from the bowels of the earth, and the road kept having convulsions. It was like a huge snake thrashing around in its death throes. Rakesh found that lying on the ground was even more difficult than riding his bicycle.

The cricket match, which had started a little while earlier, came to an abrupt end as a huge rent appeared across the pitch. Into it fell a fast bowler, an umpire, and a fielder standing at silly mid-on. They were rescued later, but it was the first time anywhere that a match had to be abandoned due to an earthquake.

Those who were playing, or watching from the lakeside pavilion, heard a thunderous roar. It was due to half the hillside falling into the lake. The earth, along with trees, bushes and rocks, simply bulged out, and then came



beneath him. He saw his bicycle sweep past. And he was never to see it again.

Grandfather and Mukesh were in the bazaar, eating sweets. They both shared a passion for *gulab-jamuns*. The old man and the small boy stood outside the sweet shop, popping syrupy *gulab-jamuns* down their throats.

The bazaar itself was a hive of activity. It was the busiest hour of the day. The street was crowded with women shopping for vegetables, and pavement-vendors selling everything from shiny brassware to old clothes and second-hand comics, in competition with the bigger shops just off the road. Weaving in and out of the crowd were cyclists, scooterists, pony carts, stray

cows, stray dogs, and even stray policemen.

Mukesh had eaten four *gulab-jamuns* and Grandfather six when the sweet shop began to wobble about in front of them. Then the cloth awning collapsed, burying the shopkeeper among his sweetmeats. His muffled shouts for help were lost in the noise from the street, where people were shouting and rushing about in a panic.

Grandfather and Mukesh found themselves on top of the struggling shopkeeper. As he freed himself, Mukesh got stuck in the awning and had to be helped out, and all the time the ground was heaving about and shops were tottering and collapsing like packs of cards.

In the space of a few seconds, a straight bazaar had become a crooked bazaar. The road had been twisted out of shape to such an extent that some shops that had been on the left now turned up on the right, and vice-versa. A beggar in a cart, who had never been known to walk, now leapt to his feet and ran for his life. The cows had vanished and so had the policemen. A motor-cycle had disappeared into a hole in the ground, while a car had mounted the steps of the Town Hall. A *tonga*-pony galloped down the middle of the road; of the *tonga* and its driver there was no sign.

(To continue...)

crashing down. Dust and water rose skywards, and at the same time the bed of the lake erupted, rose like a tidal wave and spewed its contents over the surrounding plain. Fortunately for both cricketers and spectators, this massive surge of water was flowing in the opposite direction. But it swept away a number of parked cars, several grazing cattle and goats, telegraph poles, and the walls of the old jail.

Here was a chance for the hundreds of inmates of the jail to escape. But they were too shocked by the suddenness of the disaster to be able to do anything except make a dash for the high ground behind the jail. A few could not make it and were washed away by the rushing water of the upturned lake. Those who reached safety, huddled together in groups, waiting to be rescued.

Rakesh saw the wave coming towards him as he lay on the ground. It was about fifty metres away when he scrambled to his feet and ran for the nearest tree.

Fortunately it was a large banyan tree, well anchored with its many aerial roots—branches that had come down to the ground and taken root again. It was also an easy tree to climb. Rakesh climbed as high as he could go, glancing down as the advancing water swirled around

# The Fearless Four

## CLEANING UP THE BEACH

One day, Deepak has some good news...

That's wonderful!

My journalist uncle is to camp out at Shrigadh beach to do a feature. He wants us to join him!

Yippee!

When they are at Shrigadh...

What a lovely beach! And it's so clean here!

Maybe the tourists haven't 'discovered' it as yet!

They spend a peaceful evening on the beach.

Children, remember to put out the fire and clean up the spot before we retire. We mustn't dirty this nice beach.

Oh, it's so pleasant and peaceful here. I shall sleep like a log tonight.

Me, too!

Afterwards.

**GRR.. GARR.. ROOOM..**

A group of young bikers suddenly appear on the scene!

Yippee! It's party time folks!

They race their bikes madly round and round the beach.

**YAAAAHOOOOO!**

**DROOOM..**

Afterwards, they have a noisy party.

HURRAH! Cheers, friends!

Hip hip...

The young campers spend a sleepless night.

Oh! What a racket those fellows are making!

Inconsiderate people!

Next morning, as they stumble out of their tents, bleary-eyed...

Oh, my goodness! Just look at ...

...they are horrified by the sight.

Tetrapacks, broken bottles, used paper plates...ugh!

...the trash those picnickers left behind!

Just then, the local fishermen arrive on the scene.

Hey! What's all this?

Seeing the mess, they are furious.



Who has dirtied up our beautiful beach?

The children explain.



A group of young men had come last night on motorbikes, uncle!

They must have been college students having a party here.

Meanwhile, one of the fishermen finds something...



Look! It's an ID card.

The children swing into action.



No point in standing idle. Let's clean up.

They are joined by the fishermen.

At this point, their uncle's photographer colleague arrives.



Hey, what's going on here?

On learning the story, he has an idea.

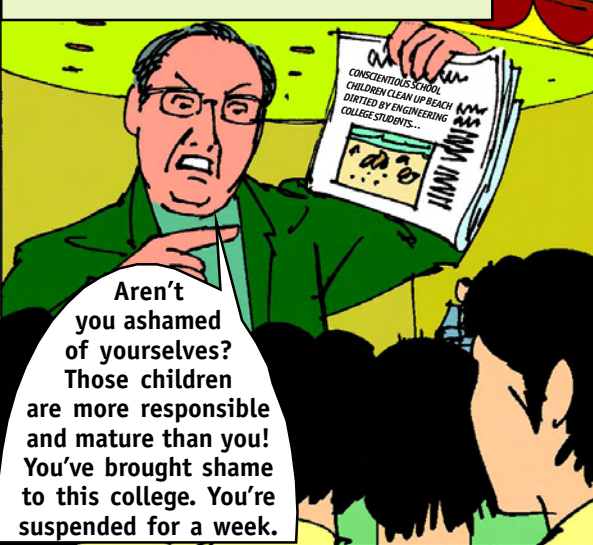


This will make a front-page scoop for tomorrow's paper! Keep going, folks, while I click a few pictures!



On seeing the papers next morning, the Principal of the Engineering College gets a shock!

Furious, he summons the errant students.



Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? Those children are more responsible and mature than you! You've brought shame to this college. You're suspended for a week.

The students are angry.



Those 'do-gooder' kids are the cause of all this trouble!

Yeah! If they hadn't done their cleaning-up act, no one would have known about our party!



*Bent on revenge, they land up again at the beach that evening.*



*Suddenly, the fishermen come running...*



*This is more than the youngsters had bargained for!*



*In the melee, one of them falls and is left behind.*

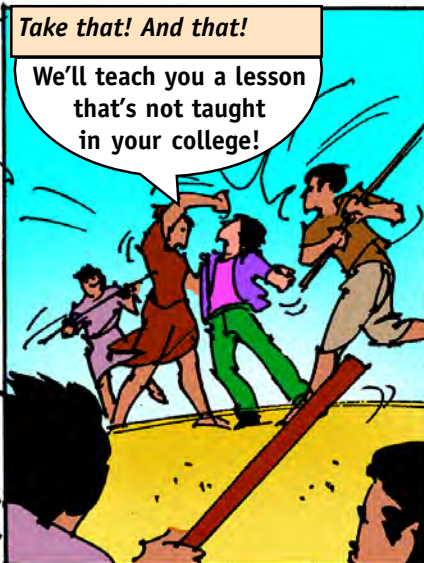


The next moment—



Take that! And that!

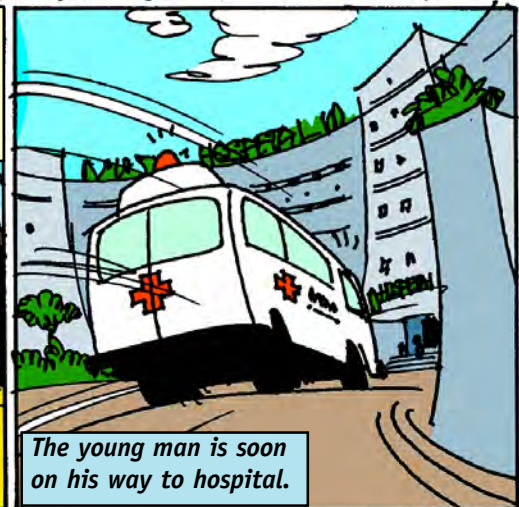
We'll teach you a lesson that's not taught in your college!



It is left to the children to rescue him.



Deepak's uncle telephones for an ambulance.



The young man is soon on his way to hospital.

Next morning —



Come, let's go and find out how he is.

It is a reformed gang whom the children meet in the hospital room.



END

## HEAVEN OR HELL

Once a preacher in England had a doubt, following the death of some scientists. Would they have gone to heaven or hell? Logically, they would not have earned the blessing of the Lord as they had not been seen in the church for prayers. At the same time they had not sinned, as their discoveries had benefited the community. While pondering the question, the preacher dozed off.

Soon, he had a dream in which he found himself in the uppermost level of heaven, where he recognised some people who had been regulars in the church. Eager to find an answer to the doubt bothering him, he asked the officials of heaven whether the scientists were also living there. He was told that they had all been sent to hell. The preacher was now keen to visit hell and meet them and help them go to heaven by giving them some spiritual advice. He was told that it was possible to travel from heaven to hell by train.

The preacher bought a ticket and got into the train. It started its descent, stopping at each level. As it left the borders of heaven and approached hell, he found the journey increasingly difficult to endure. By the time the train reached its destination – the bottom of hell – the preacher felt he could not take in any more of the terrible sights. The guard came in and reminded him that the journey had ended. He then got off the train and walked out.

Moments later, the preacher was astonished. Could this place really be hell? It was more beautiful than the uppermost level of heaven! As he stood wonderstruck, he found one of the scientists he was eager to meet. He told him: "When I came here, I was fearing that you must be enduring great torture. But I find you're comfortable in a place that is more beautiful than even heaven! How is this possible?"

With a smile, the scientist replied: "It is like this. When we first arrived, this place was a stony wasteland, swarming with heaps of dirt and riddled with swamps and sand-dunes that belched fire. But we put our heads together and produced metal; we then made implements and machines, and with them, we levelled the dunes, destroyed the garbage, and ploughed the land. In this manner, we transformed hell. We realised that if we act for the right purpose, even a place like hell can be transformed to heaven."

The preacher woke up on the last word of the scientist. He thought he now had the answer to the question he had asked himself. If people were to put their mind and actions to right use with the right intention, anything could be possible.





A PAGE FROM INDIAN HISTORY

# MANDU FALLS

**N**asir-ud-din left his kingdom to his second son Mahmud. Although Mahmud II had himself crowned with a great deal of fanfare, he was quite as incompetent as his father. But he was not as wicked as he had been. He was a very bad administrator and most indiscreet about state affairs. It was Mahmud's right hand man, Medini Rai, a Rajput chief, who took the reins from him and actually ruled Malwa.

According to some historians, he was commonly known as Gada Shah, a nickname that was better known than his own. Visitors to Mandu can even now see two imposing buildings, one known as Gada Shah's house and the other as Gada Shah's shop. In Gada Shah's house there is a painting of a Rajput chief and a lady. They are believed to be the portraits of Medini Rai and his wife.

When Mahmud realised that Medini Rai had almost become the uncrowned king, he tried his best to throw him out. Of course, it was quite beyond his power to do so. He was no match to the brave and shrewd Medini Rai. Mahmud then appealed to Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat to help him. Muzaffar Shah succeeded in getting rid of Medini Rai, and Mahmud showed his gratitude by giving Muzaffar Shah many expensive gifts.

But Mahmud could not get on with Muzaffar Shah's son, Bahadur Shah. He quarrelled with Bahadur Shah so bitterly that the latter imprisoned Mahmud. Bahadur Shah then marched to Mandu and conquered it. The year was 1526. So Malwa now became a part of Gujarat and so it remained until 1534 when it was conquered by Humayun.

How Humayun conquered Mandu is an interesting story. He had heard what a beautiful place Malwa was and was keen to make it a part of the Mughal empire. He sent for his ministers and soldiers to plan a strategy to capture the fort of Mandu. "It is really well guarded, sire," said one, "and it is surrounded by a high wall."

"That should pose no problem," said Humayun who was fond of adventure.

"But there are many gates to the fort, all of them really strong and sturdy," said another.

"Then it is for you to visit the place and find out which is likely to be most suitable," said Humayun.

"That wouldn't be necessary, sire," said the chief, "I already have a very good idea about the lay of the land. I know, Tarapur Gate should be the one from which we operate."

# TO MUGHALS

“Very well. Tarapur Gate it shall be,” assented Humayun. “We shall operate by night and take them by surprise.”

“But the walls are very high, your majesty,” said one of the ministers.

Humayun laughed. “Haven’t you heard of ropes and ladders, my dear? We carry them, of course. And lights, too. I’m not too old to scale walls yet!”

Everything was planned up to the minutest details. Humayun and his soldiers quietly reached the place and waited patiently in the deep forest just outside the fort. They could see the lights inside and hear the sounds of revelry—talk and laughter, the tinkling of glasses, the chime of dancing-bells which continued long past midnight. Finally there was a hush as everyone including Bahadur Shah went off to retire for the night.

Humayun and his men made for the Tarapur Gate and selected a part of the wall which would be the easiest to scale as there were huge trees nearby. “Fetch the ropes and the ladder,” whispered Humayun, “I shall go first, of course. Some of you will have to gag the guards at the gate so that they don’t make a sound.” He scaled the steep wall and jumped inside. The soldiers followed him in quick succession.

Before the guards realised what was happening they were gagged, tied up tight and secure, and thrown under bushes.

“Go and open the gate,” ordered Humayun. “Then bring all our horses and flags and weapons. Quick!”

By the time it was morning and Bahadur Shah was up, Mandu was already in the hands of the Mughals. Humayun’s people took over everything. Bahadur Shah was rudely awakened from his slumber.

“Come, come. This bed isn’t good enough for you now,” said Humayun. “There is another waiting for you,”

“Who the deuce are you? And how dare you come into my bedroom?” muttered Bahadur Shah rubbing his eyes. “And where do you want me to go?”

“To the prison, of course,” said Humayun, “the Mughal prison, since Mandu now belongs to me.”

Humayun spent some months in Mandu while he settled the affairs of Malwa. Before he returned to Agra, he left one of his old officers, Qadir Shah, in charge of Malwa. Qadir Shah sent for his own army and tried his best to govern the place. But he could not retain his hold on Malwa for long. It was conquered by Sher Shah in 1542. He appointed Shuja Khan as the new governor.

After his death, his son Baaz Bahadur became the new ruler. You already know the story of Baaz Bahadur and his queen Roopmati. They led a life of music while they lived in Mandu and are remembered to this day.

- Swapna Dutta



# SCIENCE FAIR

- By Rosscode  
Krishna Pillai

## FEBRUARY-BORN: GALILEO GALILIE

**G**alileo Galilie, whom Albert Einstein called the “father of modern science”, was born on February 15, 1564 in Pisa in Italy. When he was ten, he moved to Florence to be with his parents. He was educated in a school run by Christian monks. When he was 17, his father enrolled him for a medical degree in the University of Pisa. But Galileo left the course and took up mathematics and natural science, in which his interests lay.

When he was 21, he became a teacher of mathematics in a school in Florence. In 1589, he was appointed Professor of mathematics at the University of Pisa, where he earned reputation as a brilliant lecturer. He wrote a series of essays in which he put forward the idea that theories should be tested by experiments.

Three years later he became Professor of mathematics at the University of Padua, where he worked for 18 years and taught geometry, mechanics and astronomy to medical students. He described this period as the happiest in his life.

In 1602, he pursued his investigations on the theory of motion and formulated the law of falling bodies, saying that all objects, irrespective of their weight, would fall at the same time. He also showed that a body moved along an inclined plane at a constantly increasing velocity. These discoveries led to the science of *mechanics*.

Galileo made a series of powerful telescopes with which he made many astronomical discoveries. He was the first to see and recognize mountains on the Moon, the four small bodies orbiting Jupiter (now known as moons), the phases of Venus, and that the Milky Way consists of innumerable stars. He also saw Saturn, and portions of its orbiting rings and the sunspots. He concluded that the theory of Copernicus, (see *Chandamama* February 2005) stating that the planets including the Earth moved around the Sun was correct and that Ptolemy’s system placing the Earth at the centre was wrong. The Catholic Church was infuriated by Galileo’s views and in 1616, its Inquisition forbade him from espousing Copernicus.

Galileo’s masterpiece called *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Systems of the World*, was published in 1632. But the Inquisition banned its sale and condemned Galileo to house arrest for life. His health was shattered and he became blind. He wrote his most important mathematical work, *Discourses Concerning Two New Sciences*, which was smuggled out of Italy and published in the Netherlands. This included his theory that the distance a body moves from rest under uniform acceleration is proportional to the square of the time taken.

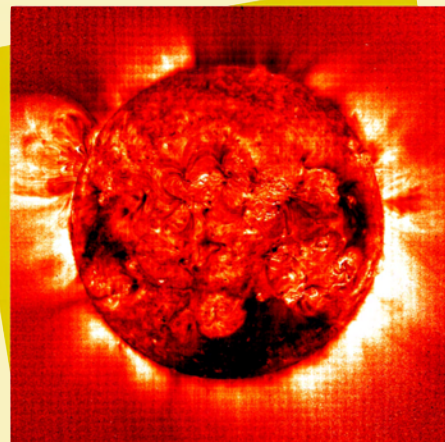
On January 8, 1642, the great man of science passed away in Arcetri near Florence, now in Italy.



# EXPLORING THE SUN-HELIOSPHERE SYSTEM

The year 2007-2008 is to be observed as the "International Heliophysical Year" (IHY). It is to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957-58, considered "the most successful international science programmes of all time." The IHY will have internationally co-ordinated investigative programmes by scientists in cross-disciplinary fields of heliophysics leading to a greater understanding of fundamental universal processes governing the Sun, the Earth, other planets and the 'heliosphere'. The knowledge developed through the activities is expected to ensure the safety of future human explorers and the spacecraft and robots in the space environment.

'Heliophysics' is a new term applied to the study of the fundamental physical processes of the space environment from the Sun to the Earth, to other planets, to interplanetary space and beyond to the local interstellar space. We live in the environment of the 'heliosphere', the entire region of space influenced by the Sun and its enormous magnetic field. From the Sun's corona and its magnetic field particles of ionized atoms called 'solar wind' stream off in all directions at speeds of several hundred km/s per hour. The solar wind creates a magnetized bubble of hot plasma around the Sun. This is called the 'heliosphere'.



## QUOTATIONS

"A mathematician is a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat which isn't there."

**-Charles Darwin**

"Blind patriotism is a serious block in the way to truth."

**-P.C.Ray**

"Almost all ancient religions tell us of an impossible Utopia where everybody lived in peace and harmony, undisturbed by famine and pestilence. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is common knowledge now that instead of being the best creation in the Universe the Earth is nothing but a spark of the sun."

**-Meghnad Saha**

## SCIENCE QUIZ

1. What is the practice of eating insects, quite common among people in certain parts of India, China, Australia, Africa, Latin America and Mexico known as?  
a. Entomology; b. Entomophagy;  
c. Entomophily; d. Enteritis.
2. Which Western scientist gave the first correct picture of human anatomy?  
a. Andreas Vesalius; b. Galen;  
c. William Harvey; d. Karl Landsteiner.
3. Which of the following elements is a carcinogen (a substance likely to cause cancer)?  
a. Silicon; b. Cadmium; c. Carbon; d. Chromium.



**ANSWER:** 1. b. Entomophagy, 2. a. Andreas Vesalius (1514-64), Flemish anatomist, 3. d. Chromium.



## VANITY

**W**hile Brahamadutt ruled Benares, Bodhisattva was born as Guthila. He was an expert in playing the veena. At the age of sixteen, he was recognised as an unrivalled master on that instrument in the whole continent. The King of Benares appointed him Court musician.

Some years later, a group of traders left Benares for Ujjain for purposes of business. Thanks to Guthila even the common folk of Benares had a well-developed taste in veena music. The traders, on reaching Ujjain, thought of enjoying some music. They told the merchants of Ujjain, "We're eager to listen to music. Could you arrange the best veena player of Ujjain to entertain us? Money is no consideration."

Now, Moosil was considered the best veena player in Ujjain. So, he was engaged to entertain the traders from Benares. Moosil came to where the traders were staying. He played for quite a long time and yet there was no indication whether the traders were enjoying the music or not. Moosil tried various types of music, but they only left the listeners cold.

"Good sirs," Moosil said at last, "I've been

playing to the best of my ability, but you don't appear to derive any joy from it. Doesn't my music appeal to you?"

The traders looked at one another in surprise. "Have you been *playing*?" one exclaimed. "We thought you were only tuning the strings!"

"We thought there was something wrong with the instrument!" said another.

Moosil felt humiliated. "No doubt," he told the traders, "you've listened to a greater exponent of veena than I and I've failed to impress you. May I know who that Master is?"

"Probably you've never heard of Guthila, the Court musician of Benares?" the traders asked Moosil.

"In that case," Moosil said, "I shall not rest until I'm recognised as a player equal to Guthila. You need not pay me anything for my performance."

That very day Moosil left for Benares, where he called on Guthila. "Sir," he said, "I come from Ujjain. My name is Moosil. I've come to learn veena from you. I'll be your pupil till you make me as good a player as yourself."

## A JATAKA TALE

Guthila agreed to teach him. Moosil stayed with Guthila, learnt his lessons at home, and accompanied him to the Court. Several years went by. One day, Guthila told Moosil, "My son, I've taught you all I know about veena. Now you can go back to your city."

But Moosil did not want to return to Ujjain, where people had no good taste for music. His ambition was to become the Court musician of Benares. Now that he knew as much as Guthila, he was entitled to such an honour. Moreover, Guthila was getting on in years.

So, he told his teacher, "Sir, I've no desire to leave Benares. Since you certify that I know all that you know, kindly get me invited to the royal court." Guthila broached the subject to the King of Benares.

"As he has been your pupil for long," said the king "I don't mind engaging him. But I shall pay him only half of what I've been paying you. If he's agreeable, he can take up the post."

When Moosil heard this, he was disappointed. How was he inferior to Guthila? Why should he be paid only half of what Guthila was getting?

Vanity had made Moosil blind to reason. He went straight to the king. "Your majesty, it appears you want to engage me as a Court musician on half pay. It's unfair, since I'm as much a musician

as my teacher, and my teacher himself can vouch for it."

The king was annoyed. "I'm aware that you were the Master's pupil, but I did not know that you are his equal. I shall not believe it without proof," said the king.

"Your majesty can put me to a test," Moosil submitted.

"I shall arrange a competition between you and your master. If you prove yourself equal, you shall be engaged on full pay. But if you fail, you shall have nothing. Do you agree?" asked the king.

A competition was arranged. Both Guthila and Moosil tried to excel each other. Guthila broke one of the strings of his veena but went on playing on the remaining strings. Seeing this Moosil, too, broke one of his strings and went on playing. Soon Guthila broke one more string and Moosil also broke one more string. Soon, the last string of Guthila's veena was broken and Moosil broke the last string on his veena.

Now came the climax. Guthila was still able to produce notes and music even on broken strings, while Moosil was incapable of producing even a single note. The entire court cheered Guthila and booed Moosil.

Because of his vanity Moosil was thoroughly disgraced. That very day he left for Ujjain.



# PULLING THE RING OUT



Summer was at its peak. The sun rose early, every day. It glimmered like a ball of fire even at sunrise. In about three hours, it made the earth uncomfortably hot. It was so, day after day, for days at a stretch.

Wells dried up. Streams looked sandy but for thin ribbons of water. Plants drooped. Trees looked listless. Animals scurried away to shady spots. Hardly anyone stirred out of home after a couple of hours of dawn.

One summer morning, just after dawn, Emperor Akbar set out for a stroll. With him were a few courtiers. Birbal was among them.



"It is hot, even at this hour," Emperor Akbar said.

"It is, *Badshah!*" said the courtiers.

"Wells and ponds are drying up." The Emperor noticed the wall of a well at some distance and added, "Come. Let us see whether it has any water."

The party reached the well.

The Emperor leaned over the wall and peeped in. So did a few courtiers. The pond held no water. The bottom appeared bone dry.

"Not a drop of water," sighed the Emperor.

"It'll remain so till the rains come, *Shahenshah!* So this is the best of times to drop something into the well and watch it hit the bottom. At other times, the object hits the water and gets lost in the depths of the waters. So we never see it hit the bottom." Birbal picked up a stone and dropped it into the well. The stone hit the bottom with a mild thud. There it stayed put.

"One stone deserves another." The Emperor quickly removed his gold ring, set with a huge diamond, off his finger, and dropped it into the well. Birbal was taken aback.

"One stone deserves another, *Badshah!* That's fair enough. But a plain stone doesn't deserve a precious stone," Birbal pointed out.

Instantly Emperor Akbar realized his mistake. He had acted in haste. He had thrown away a very priceless ring. But he didn't bother. He could ask someone good at climbing into wells to retrieve the ring. Then a weird idea came to him.

"Birbal, I can always ask our men to get into the well and recover the ring. But . . ." the Emperor paused.

"Yes, *Shahenshah!*" all the courtiers closed in around him.

"But can anyone pull out the ring without getting into the well? Lift the ring magically from the well while



remaining on the ground?" Emperor Akbar turned to the courtiers.

"Impossible," said the oldest among the courtiers.

"Is there no way you can get the ring out without getting into the well?" the Emperor repeated the question.

"None that I can think of, *Alampana*," another courtier said in a low voice.

"What have you to say, Birbal? You've been unusually quiet," Akbar turned to Birbal.

"I'm thinking," Birbal scratched his head.

"He thinks he will find a way out by scratching his head," a courtier, who hated Birbal, made fun of him.

"It often works for me, my friend. Maybe, it won't work for you!" Birbal snapped.

"Why should it work for you?" the courtier growled.

"Because I've brains. I'm not a brainless wonder like you." Birbal heard the Emperor and the rest of the courtiers burst into laughter, but continued, "I scratch the head and my brain starts working," he paused, grinned and added, "I now know what to do to get the ring out without going down to the bottom of this well."

"Birbal, tell me how you will do that," the Emperor asked, curiously.

"*Jahanpanah*, I need time to do that. If all goes well, I should get the ring out by dusk. Till then, *Shahenshah*, let my plan remain a secret," Birbal begged.

"But why?"

"I've never tried out this plan. At the moment, I only have a hunch that my plan would work. I've to try it out. I can try it out best in secrecy," Birbal sounded polite, yet firm.

"No dirty trick, Birbal," the courtier, whom Birbal had called a brainless wonder, now found his voice.

"I won't dare do that, *Alampana*! I love life," Birbal smiled wanly. "And then why should I try dirty tricks? I know what is to be done to lift the ring out of the well while standing on the ground," Birbal sounded sure of himself.

"Yet, *Shahenshah*, I suggest you post a sentry to keep a watch on what Birbal does," the courtier appealed to the Emperor.

"I trust Birbal. But I accept your suggestion. For if



he does get the ring out without getting into the well, even you'll be forced to agree that Birbal is far more intelligent than you," the Emperor gave the courtier a stern stare.

Emperor clapped his hands. Two guards, who stood at some distance, ran to the Emperor. They bowed. The Emperor told them to keep a watch over the well. "Don't allow anyone to go down into the well," he ordered the men. They bowed and retreated.

"I shall start working rightaway, *Shahenshah*. By evening you'll have the ring, if all goes well. Till then, with your permission, *Shahenshah*, I'll stay back. I have to work out the details of my plan," Birbal smiled at the Emperor.

"It's getting hot. I must hurry back to the cool of the palace. I hope you succeed," the Emperor turned to the courtiers.

"I'll succeed, *Alampana*, I will, with your good wishes," Birbal thanked the Emperor.

The Emperor walked off. The courtiers went along with him. Birbal watched till the group vanished from sight.

The two guards closed in and took positions around the well.

Birbal got into action. He noticed a small hut at some

distance. He also spotted a cow, tied to a tree, near the hut. He hurried to the hut, stood at the door and called out, "Is anybody in?"

An old woman, bent with age, came out. She held her palm over her eyes and peered at Birbal. "Who're you? What do you want?" she croaked.

Birbal didn't give his name. He only told her what he had come for. "Maaji, I want fresh cow dung. I'll pay for it," he pulled out a coin from the folds of his dress and held it out.

"Beta, I don't sell cow dung. I dry it and powder it. It turns into manure. I scatter it on the little piece of field I own. So I get a rich harvest," she scowled.

"I want just a small quantity, Maaji," Birbal purred like a cat.

"Aha! All right. You may find fresh dung there. You can have it for free," she held her index finger in the direction of the cow, pulled the *pallu* of her sari tighter over her head and turned in saying, "So hot, already."

Birbal walked up to the cow. He found a fresh mound

of dung. He did not like the idea of picking up the dung by hand. But he had no choice. So he came down on his knees, quickly gathered a ball of dung in his left hand and walked back to the well. He rolled the dung carefully, leant over the wall, located the ring, held the hand with the ball of dung right above the ring and let it drop down under gravity. He checked. The ring was not visible any more.

The dung had hit the mark. He then turned and looked all around. His eyes fell on a medium sized stone. He picked it up, tied a string to the stone, held one end of the string, aimed the stone at the ball of dung that now enveloped the ring and dropped it. His marksmanship was perfect, this time too. The stone landed on the ball of cow dung.

Birbal's face lit up with a sense of fulfilment. He tied the end of the string in his hand to a bush next to the well.

"Stay here. I shall come back here before dusk," Birbal told the guards.

The guards bowed to him.

"Oh, it is already hot. I presume it will be one of the hottest days of the season," he walked off, happy at the thought that the heat would help him execute his plan and soon reached home.

Around one hour before dusk fell, he set out from his house. He walked to the well. The guards were at the well. They saw Birbal and saluted him. Birbal nodded to them. He walked across, untied the string tied to the bush and held it firmly. Then he walked up to the wall of the well.

Carefully he pulled the string towards him. The stone to which the other end of the string was tied moved up. Sticking to it now was the dried ball of dung. Inside the dung, Birbal knew, lay the Emperor's ring. He pulled slowly, gently, till the stone with the dried dung was level with the rim of the wall of the well. He reached out, pulled in the stone with the dried ball of dung. He quickly crushed the dried dung. Down fell the ring, traces of dung still coating it. Birbal picked up the ring. He walked back to his house, cleaned the ring and headed for the palace. Soon he reached the Emperor's presence. Many courtiers were still with him.

"*Shahenshah!*" Birbal bowed.

"Got the ring?" the Emperor asked.

"Here it is, *Alampana*," Birbal walked across, till he stood close to the throne, and handed the ring to the Emperor.

"Thank you," the Emperor sounded very pleased. "Now, tell me how you did it?"

Birbal gave the details.

"*Wah, wah!* Birbal! I'm proud of you. You're indeed the most intelligent of all my courtiers," he picked up a small bag that lay on a table, close at hand. The bag jingled when he lifted it and presented it to Birbal. He bowed low while taking the bag. He knew what it held. Gold mohars! A hundred gold mohars!

"*Shahenshah!* In all this world, there's no ruler more kind and generous than you!"

Birbal bowed again, while the courtiers gnashed their teeth in envy.

- R.K. Murthi





## MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS

**R**am, Shyam and Karan were three friends who lived in the village of Lakshmipur. They were farmers and helped each other in their day-to-day activities. While Ram and Shyam would often take their own decisions in all matters pertaining to themselves, Karan was in the habit of consulting his friends for anything and everything. He would always seek the opinion of his friends in all matters, right from choosing the crop to be cultivated in a particular year to the provisions to be purchased for celebrating festivals. In fact, he would never use his own discretion at all for anything.

During a particular year, they reaped a good harvest. All three could make a substantial income. They decided that they would attend the harvest festival in the capital, Rampur. Ram and Shyam, however, did not want Karan to go with them.

They told him: "Friend! It's going to be a long and tiresome journey to the capital. You'll be more of a nuisance to us during the journey. Hence, we advise you to stay back in the village." But Karan insisted that he would accompany them at any cost. So, they reluctantly took him along

with them. After three days of tiresome journey, they had to travel in a countryboat on a river then in spate. Unfortunately, the boat got stuck in a whirlpool and capsized. The three got hold of a log and somehow managed to swim safely to an uninhabited island. They were extremely tired and hungry and started searching for something to eat.

They saw a big mango tree. At once Ram tried to climb the tree. Suddenly, a giant appeared before them and shouted: "This is my tree! You can't take fruits without my permission. Who are you?"

The friends got the shock of their life and tried to flee! The giant called them back. He smiled at them and said: "Don't get scared! I shall not harm you! Tell me who you are and how you reached this place!"

The friends narrated the purpose of their trip and how they landed on the island. The giant took pity on them, plucked the mangoes himself and offered them. Then, he said, "Now you can't leave this island on your own in the absence of a boat. However, I can help you. Each of you can ask for a boon from me and I shall fulfil it

on one condition. The boons should not be the same. Each one should ask for a different boon."

At once, Ram said, "I don't want to go for the harvest festival. I want to go back home safely." Next moment, he vanished from the island and was back in his house.

Shyam said, "After coming this far, I would like to attend the festival at Rampur. I don't want to miss it." Next moment, he found himself in Rampur, where the festival was being held.

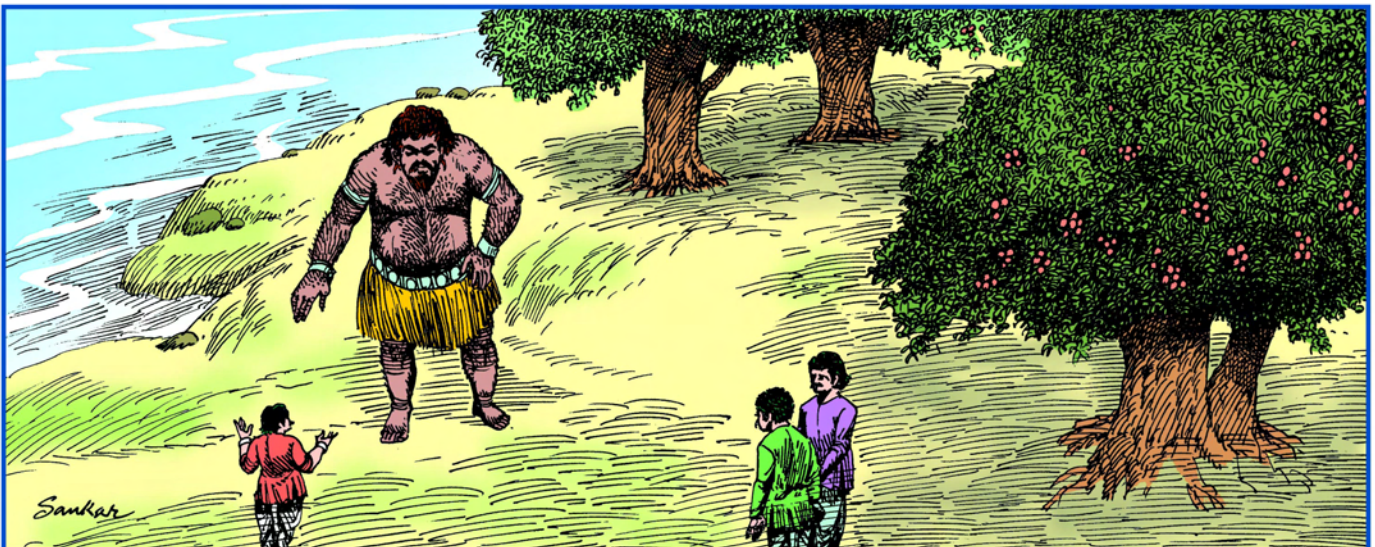
It was now Karan's turn. As he would do anything only after consulting his friends, he was at a loss to ask for a boon himself. He said, "To know what boon should I ask, I need the opinion of my friends. Better, if they are back here."

At once, Ram and Shyam were back on the same island. Though Karan was delighted to meet his friends again, they were extremely annoyed at his foolish request to the giant. In the mean time, the giant had vanished. Ram and Shyam took Karan to task. "That's why we told you not to accompany us but stay back in the village. You didn't listen to us and now, you've put us in great trouble. Why did you call us back? Couldn't you ask for a boon yourself? Even a child could have done it without consulting anyone. Now, how do we get out of this island? The giant is not to be seen anywhere!"

To their great surprise and delight, the giant appeared again. Ram and Shyam fell at his feet and prayed: "We beg your pardon for misusing the boon. It happened because of this idiot Karan. Actually, he is not in the habit of taking any independent decision. Even for the most trivial things, he would seek our views. So, in this case, too, he needed our suggestion to ask for a boon and has foolishly brought us back. We request you to grant us boons once again. We would seek a boon on behalf of Karan, too."

The giant laughed loudly and told Karan, "It's too bad! There are times when you should take decisions yourself. You should not always depend on others for making decisions for you. You can consult your friends any number of times, but you should use your discretion in making the final decision. All right! Let your friends ask for a boon for you on your behalf! But let this be the last time."

At once, Ram and Shyam told the giant: "We shall ask for the same boon for us as we did earlier. Please send Karan to his mother-in-law's place!" Soon, the friends reached their desired destinations, while Karan landed safely in his mother-in-law's house. He resolved that he would henceforth take his own decisions.



## ASTRONAUT TALKS WITH CHILDREN

**O**n January 11, a day after India's latest satellite launch, the Indian woman astronaut Sunita Lyn Williams up there in the International Space Station (ISS) 360 km above the earth talked to a group of school children assembled in the U.S. embassy in New Delhi. With them was India's first astronaut, Rakesh Sharma. Before the inter-active meeting began, 'Suni' (her pet name) remarked that the satellite launch was a great accomplishment. To a question by a child, she said "The earth is a beautiful planet. It's hard to believe that I am able to talk to people on earth." She added that she was eager to come back to earth, though she knows that she would have to wait till June. Asked whether she would go back to space if she was given a chance, she said she would love to, though "I'm not sure whether I would want another sojourn on the ISS." "How was it like when you walked in space?" asked one of the children. Her reply was: "Floating around is just unbelievable." Her concluding remark was: "When you look at the earth from space, there are no borders. The world just looks like one beautiful place where people probably are living very peacefully." Sunita was in an informal dress-shorts and a T-shirt.



## THE 4-IN-1 LAUNCH

**I**ndia's PSLV-C7 launch of January 10 is a remarkable achievement for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for two reasons. One: four satellites were sent up in one rocket.

Two: the capsule in one satellite was to be recovered on a subsequent date. One of the four satellites belongs to another country—Indonesia. The 54.7 kg satellite developed jointly by Indonesia and Germany was placed in the sun synchronous orbit. The micro-satellite carries as payload two cameras with high and medium resolutions for earth observation missions. The 680 kg Indian remote sensing satellite cartosat-2 was the first satellite to be "injected" into the orbit. This was followed by a 6 kg Argentinian nano satellite. The Indian mission's 550 kg satellite recovery

experiment SRE-1 was the third to be injected. The entire exercise took only 19 minutes. The assembling of the launch vehicle and its four payloads took two months to be completed. The ISRO Chairman, Mr. G.Madhavan Nair, described the event as "a perfect text-book launch." Between 1979 and 2007, India has made as many as 22 satellite launches.



# KALEIDOSCOPE



## A CHANGE IN MY LIFE



Last December, on a pleasant morning, I was going to the bus stop with some friends. On the way, we found three little children sitting on a footpath, trembling in the cold. My friends wanted to help them, but I ignored the children. We headed for the bus stop. After school, on reaching home, I ate my lunch and took rest.

Sometime later, the doorbell rang. To my great surprise, my friends had come to collect money for the hapless children. I told my mother to ignore them, but she did not. Instead, she gave them Rs.50. Later I quarrelled with her for wasting money on those useless children. She tried to explain to me, but I could not understand. Some days later, we had to attend a marriage party; we returned home late. Next day, I woke up late in the morning and was about to get dressed. I could not find my shoes. I asked my mother, but she pretended not to listen. I asked my grandmother, but she too did not listen to me. I felt like crying. Now I remembered how those children must have felt when I ignored them, misbehaved with them. From that day, I decided to help any helpless child in whatever possible way I could. I could understand the value of joy and sharing.

- **Swoyamsiddha Behera (11) New Delhi**

## RIDDLES

1. Did they play tennis in ancient Egypt?



2. What happens when you swallow uranium?

3. How do chimpanzees communicate?

4. What is a magnetic field?



5. Why do soccer players do well in school?

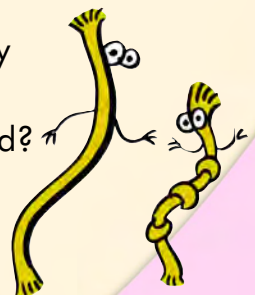
**Ashuthosh K.S. (14), Alike**

6. What did mother rope say to baby rope?

7. Which is faster, hot or cold?

**Dipankar Dutta (13), New Delhi**

(Continuation on page no 36...)





## MY BROTHER

My brother who loves to play  
And make things out of clay  
Is a naughty and lazy boy  
But he's always crazy for a toy.  
After one demand comes another  
And he promises not to ask anything further  
But the next day you'll find  
He breaks his promise in a grind.  
Though he studies the least,  
He gains good marks with great ease.  
My brother is a very envious person,  
Who is always ready for an excursion.  
When I get rebuked mercilessly  
He laughs and smiles snappishly  
Though he always gets me scolded and chided  
He is loved by me the most.

- **Manisha (12), Kharagpur**

## MY LITTLE BROTHER

My little brother is a sweet little pie,  
He is very cute and shy;  
My little brother is a sweet little pie  
And never ever does he cry;  
He likes to play and play;  
In our big plain hall  
With some water and clay.  
My little brother is very nice  
And I always wish  
Every little girl should  
Have a brother like he would.

- **Twisha Reemun (9), Kolkata**





Customer : You've changed the colour of my shirt, white into red, and charging double! Why?

Launderer : I am charging for both washing and dyeing.



Teacher : Ramesh, you have failed. Please call your father.

Ramesh : If I call my father, will you give me pass?

**Dipankar Dutta (13), New Delhi**



Policeman : Why are you driving without light?

Scooterist : Because there is light everywhere?

Policeman : Then I shall remove air from the tyres.

Scooterist : Why?

Policeman : Because there is air everywhere.



Mohan : If you put your hand in your right pocket and found 25 rupees, and put your hand in the left pocket and found 50 rupees, what would you do?

Rohan : I would immediately rush to my tailor and ask him to stitch more pockets on my trousers.

**L. Bhanu Prasad (14), Hyderabad**



Mayuri : My father has acquired Sachin Tendulkar's wrist watch.

Krupa : That's nothing; my father has Adam's apple.



Gundu : Why did you fix a bulb on your father's nameplate?

Sonu : To brighten his name in society.



Mother : I told you to bring me flowers and not a flower-pot

Son : Mummy, there is a notice board outside the gardener's house.

It says : DO NOT PLUCK FLOWERS. So, I carried away the flower-pot



**Murugesh P. (12), Alike**

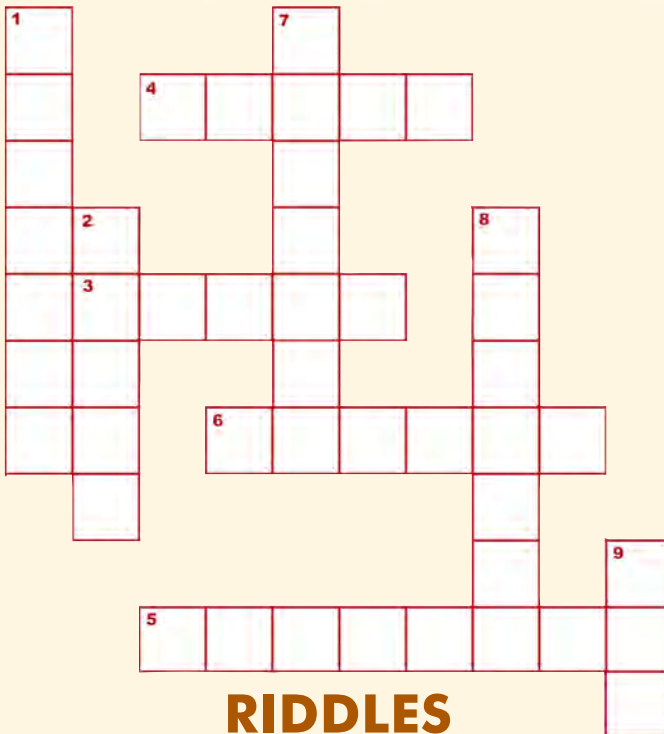


Hotel Manager : Why did you steal only nine Iddlies from my hotel?

Thief : Nine is my lucky number.

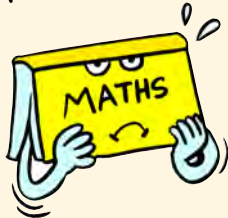
**Mayuri P. Awati (10) , Athani**

# PUZZLES



## RIDDLES

(...Continuation from page no 33)



8. Why does a maths book look so sad?

**Sulagna Satpathy (8), Mayurbhanj**

9. What is never planted, yet it grows. What is it?

10. Why did the boy put his watch into his piggy bank?

**Karan G.U. (16) Gadag**

11. Which pet always finds a place on the floor?

**Sonalika Ningombam (10), Manipur**

12. I am a man, but do not have legs,



hands or head. Still people call me a man, after prefixing me with a verb. Who am I?

**Rakshith R. Ulival (12), Alike**

**Try and crack this crossword on the Solar system. The clues given below will help you.**

### Across:

- It is called the Blue planet (5).
- This planet was discovered by Clyde Tom Baugh (5).
- It was discovered by Johann Galle (7).
- It was discovered by William Herschel (6).

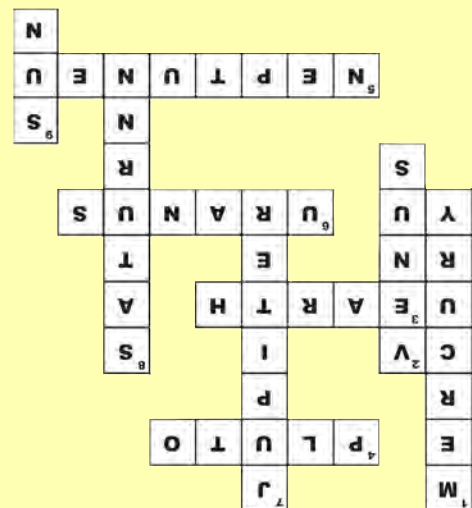
### Down :

- It is the hottest planet (7)
- Goddess of Love and Beauty (5).
- Largest planet (7).
- Named after Roman god of showing (6).
- Closest star to the earth (3).

**-K.H.Priyalakshmi(12) Manipur**

1. Yes, the Bible says Joseph was serving in the Pharaoh's court, 2. You will get atomic ache, 3. They speak chimpanzee, 4. Where they raise magnets, 5. Because they use their heads, 6. Don't be so knotty, 7. Hot, because you can catch cold, 8. Because it is full of problems, 9. Hair, 10. He wanted to save time, 11. Carpet, 12. Walkman.

### ANSWERS TO RIDDLES:



### ANSWERS TO PUZZLES:

# CHANDAMAMA INDIA QUIZ - 2

Co-sponsored by Infosys<sup>®</sup> FOUNDATION, Bangalore

*This month's quiz is based on India's history—ancient and modern.*

**What you should do:** 1. Write down the answers; 2. Mention your name, age (you should be below 16), full postal address with PIN Code; 3. Mention your subscriber number, if you are a subscriber; 4. Write on the envelope **CHANDAMAMA INDIA QUIZ-2** with your complete address; 5. Mail your entry to reach us by **February 28, 2007**; 6. The answers will be published in the April 2007 issue.

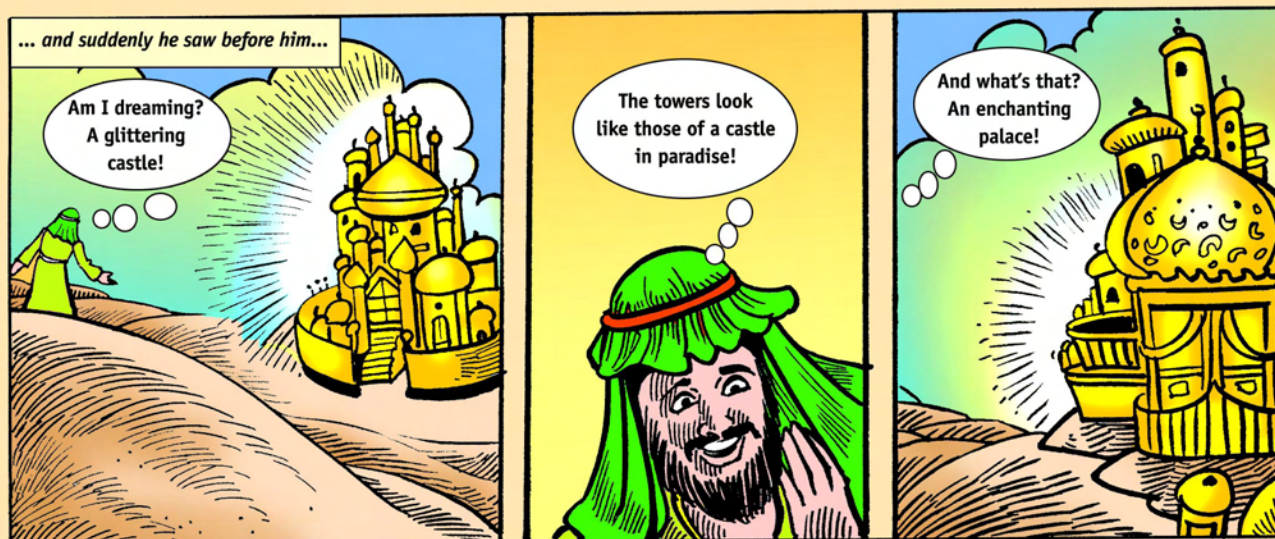
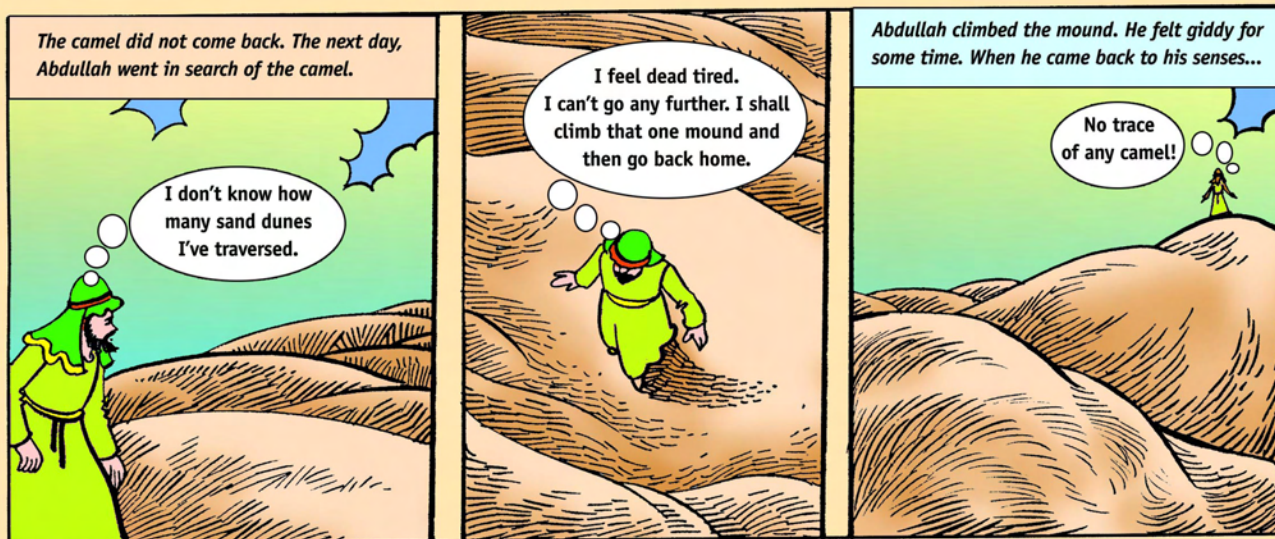
**AN  
ALL-CORRECT  
ENTRY WILL  
FETCH A CASH  
PRIZE OF  
RS 250\***

\* If there are more than one all-correct entry, a lot will be taken to decide the prizewinner. However, the names of all those who have sent all-correct entries will be published.

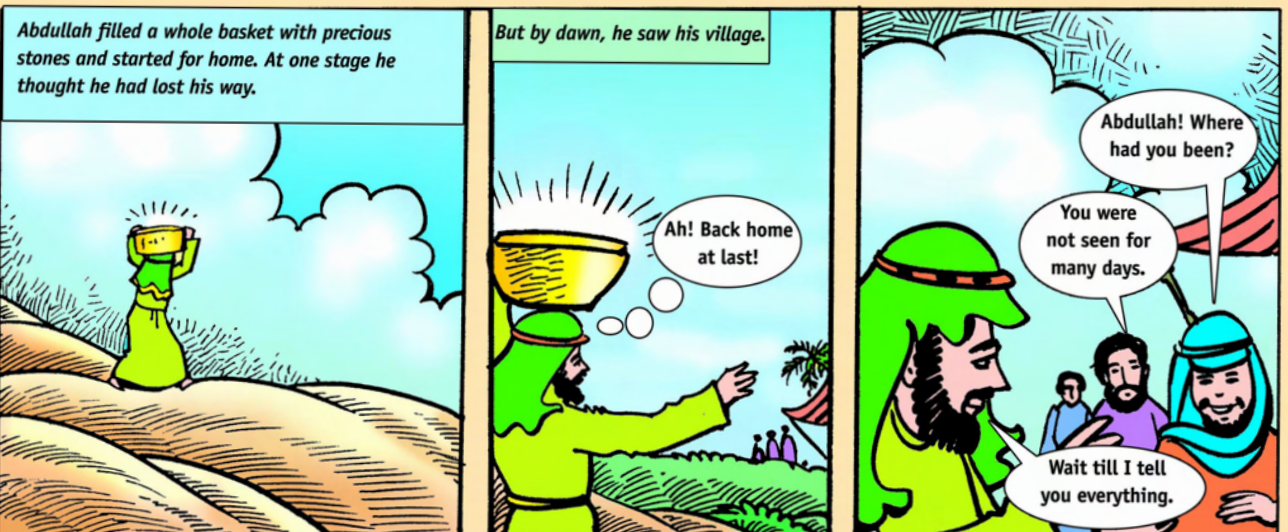
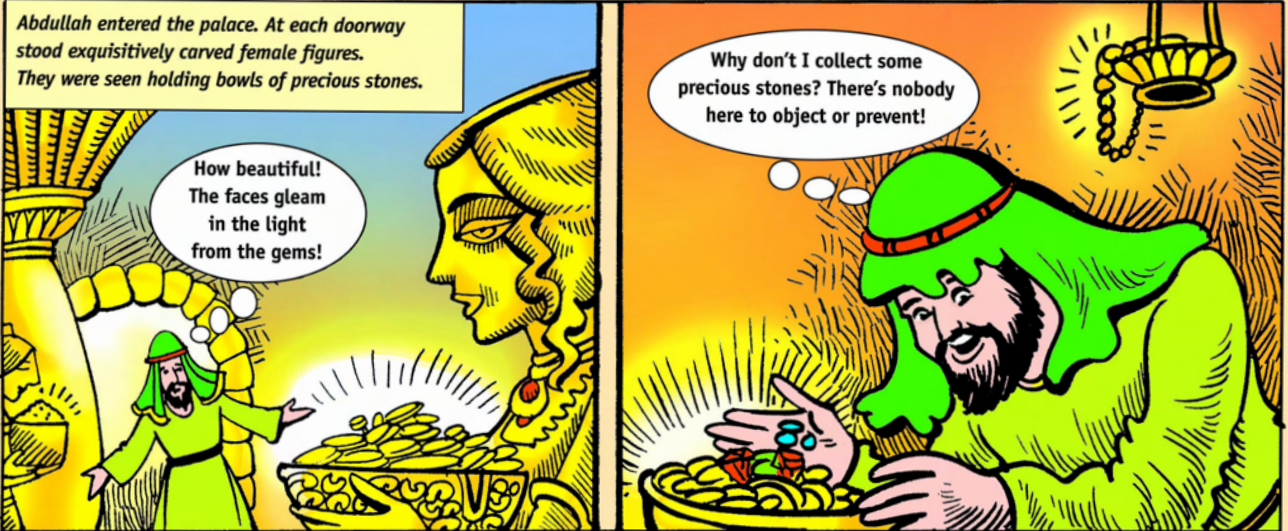
1. Who founded the Kushan dynasty?
2. Where did Chandragupta Maurya spent his last days?
3. Who built the Siva cave temple in Ellora? When?
4. Where will you visit to see the ruins of the Vijayanagar empire?
5. Which battle brought about the end of Maratha power?
6. Who introduced the Rupee currency in India?
7. Who was the Muslim woman ruler who ruled from Delhi?
8. Who took the name Milinda after embracing Buddhism?
9. Who were the Rajput rulers of Bundelkhand?
10. Which was the capital of Harshavardhana?
11. Who is known as the 'father of Indian Civil Service'?
12. Where is Akbar's mausoleum situated?
13. When did Sikkim become a full-fledged State of the Indian union? Who was its first Chief Minister?
14. Which Chera ruler conquered Lanka? When?
15. Who made English the official language of India? What was the official language till then?



# THE ARABIAN NIGHTS



# PHANTOM CITY



# THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Abdullah described his great find to his neighbours and friends.



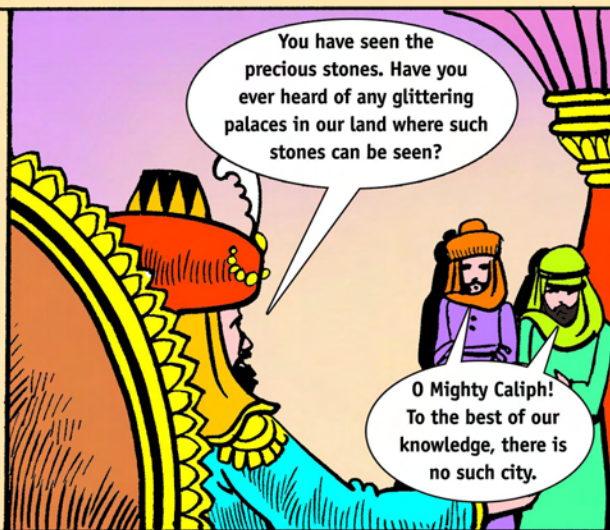
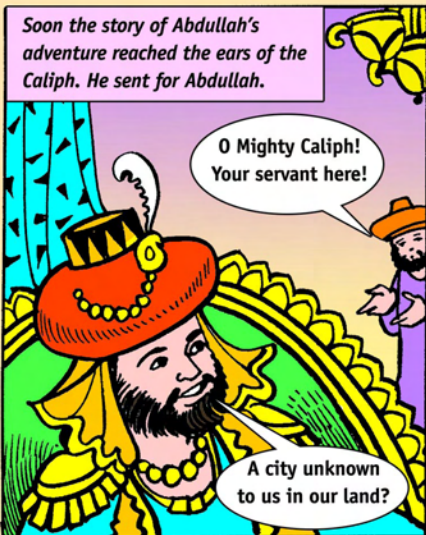
On hearing about the glittering palace, many wanted to visit the place.



Many villagers went in search of the city. Some came back disappointed, while others never returned at all.



Soon the story of Abdullah's adventure reached the ears of the Caliph. He sent for Abdullah.



## PHANTOM CITY

The Caliph then sent for the oldest man in the kingdom.

Do you know anything about such a city?

O Commander of the Faithful! I've heard of a city built by Emperor Shahdad ...


...he wanted to build something more splendid than Paradise. As he was the overlord of three hundred kings, he asked them to bring all their wealth. Thousands of divers explored the sea for pearls...

... It took an  
twenty years, and t  
asked everybody to m  
new city. He led a r  
procession. Before  
enter the ci

And then?


### And then?

... there was a terrible thunderstorm. Some people were stuck by lightning, others drowned.



His sons, who were Governors, came back and buried him in the palace. It was pillaged by marauders ...

... there was a terrible thunderstorm. Some people were stuck by lightning, others drowned.



His sons, who were Governors, came back and buried him in the palace. It was pillaged by marauders ...

... and the palace went under sand dunes and nobody knew where it was.

Let it remain forgotten for ever!

THE END

... and the palace went under sand dunes and nobody knew where it was.

Let it remain forgotten for ever!

THE END

... and the palace went under sand dunes and nobody knew where it was.

Let it remain forgotten for ever!

THE END

# COOKING UP COLOURS FOR HOLI!

**L**ook, Ma ! It's turning red!" cried out 10-year-old Dulaari as she watched her mother squeeze drops of lemon into a teaspoon of turmeric powder. Dulaari loved colours and sometimes she felt that the world around her was filled with a million colours that she yet had to discover.

As a young child she had quickly learnt the names of many of the bright colours, but she often felt that there were so many colours in nature which had not been given a name! So she started to invent her own names for them. That special red brown of the colour of the soil after the first rain she called 'mitli'! The cool green of her cat's eyes would get the same name as her cat 'billu'!

As she grew older, she got more and more fascinated by colours. She would watch her mother apply make up and watch her beautiful lips turn a bright pink! Most of all, she loved to discover new colours in the kitchen as she played around her mother when she was cooking.

Today, she had made a new discovery! The yellow



turmeric powder became a bright red when mother had added some lemon to it! It was like magic! The kitchen then became a laboratory for Dulaari, who started experimenting by mixing things to see what foods changed when mixed together. She noticed that brown bread turned black sometimes when mother turned the toaster up too high. Or that *mung dal* was green, but became brown when she boiled it!

***Did you know that some of the colours you can buy in the market for the festival of Holi are made of chemicals that are harmful to human health?***

***Here are some colours and the health problems they can create.***

Black	Lead oxide	Affects the kidney
Green	Copper Sulphate	Causes eye allergies
Silver	Aluminium	
	Bromide	Can cause cancer
Blue	Prussian Blue	Can cause skin problems
Red	Mercury Sulphite	Can cause skin cancer

*Ref : Factsheet on Holi from Toxics Link.*

***Make sure that you only use natural colours to play Holi! You can easily make your own colours. Here are some easy recipes. (See next column)***

**Yellow:** Mix *haldi* and *besan* for a bright yellow powder. Marigold flowers will also give you a yellow, when boiled in water.

**Red:** Mixing lemon juice with turmeric gives a vibrant red.

**Pink :** Beetroot is the easiest option for a deep pink/magenta coloured water. Soak overnight or boil with water.

**Green :** Green colours come from leaves like spinach, coriander and mint mixed with water. For a dry green powder use *henna* mixed with an equal quantity of any flour.

As she played around, Dulaari also quickly discovered that she had made a mess! These colours left stains on her hands and clothes and worse still, the beetroot had made a bright pink stain on mother's apron! Fortunately most of it washed off easily, before she could see what her daughter had done!

That evening Aunt Sunita came to visit and the only thing Dulaari could speak of was all the magical colours that she had discovered in the kitchen. "But you know, Dulaari," said Aunt, "colours are not always what they seem! The pretty deep red *mehndi* on my hand came from a plant that was green and this blue dress that I am wearing has been dyed with 'indigo' – another plant that is green."

"So, do all the colours we use come from plants?" asked Dulaari.

"Look around you, Dulaari, don't the stones in the garden have colours too? Rocks and soils can also be used to make colours and in olden times artists used mineral colours and vegetable dyes in their paintings," replied Aunt Sunita.

"But what about the paints in my colouring box?" asked Dulaari. "Do they also come from natural materials?"

"Not really," replied her aunt. "Modern paints are mostly synthetic – which means they come from a chemical process. Would you believe that some of the bright colours of fabrics are derived from coal tar?"

The conversation with Aunt Sunita set Dulaari thinking. She now wanted to know how the colours around her were made. Her school bag which was a blue plastic, her compass box made out of orange metal and the pretty patterns on her dinner plates – where did all these colours come from? But nobody seemed to really know and after some time she forgot about them.

Some months later after her exams were over, Dulaari was excitedly preparing for the festival of Holi. Of course, this was her absolutely favourite festival, when everyone played with colours and people turned from a boring brown into bright shades of pink, purple and blue! There was to be a big Holi party at home and all her friends would come over to play.



“Come on, Ma, let’s go and buy lots of colours for the Holi party,” she said impatiently. They walked down to the bazaar together and Dulaari was overjoyed to see all the bright colours around her. She quickly asked for all her favourite colours to be packed and brought them home, where she was delighted to find Aunty Sunita waiting for her! What was that in her hand? It seemed to be some kind of poster!

“Hello, Dulaari! Look what I’ve brought – the answers to all your questions.” Dulaari was curious to see what this colourful poster was about and she realized that it explained what the Holi colours she had just bought were made of! Be Careful – it said! INDUSTRIAL AND CHEMICAL DYES ARE HARMFUL FOR YOUR HEALTH!

Dulaari read on in horror to find that some of these colours contained harmful chemicals which were only meant for industrial use and could actually cause skin rashes and temporary blindness in people. The powders could aggravate breathing difficulties and the shiny

metallic colours left stains for long periods through which the colours seeped into the body!

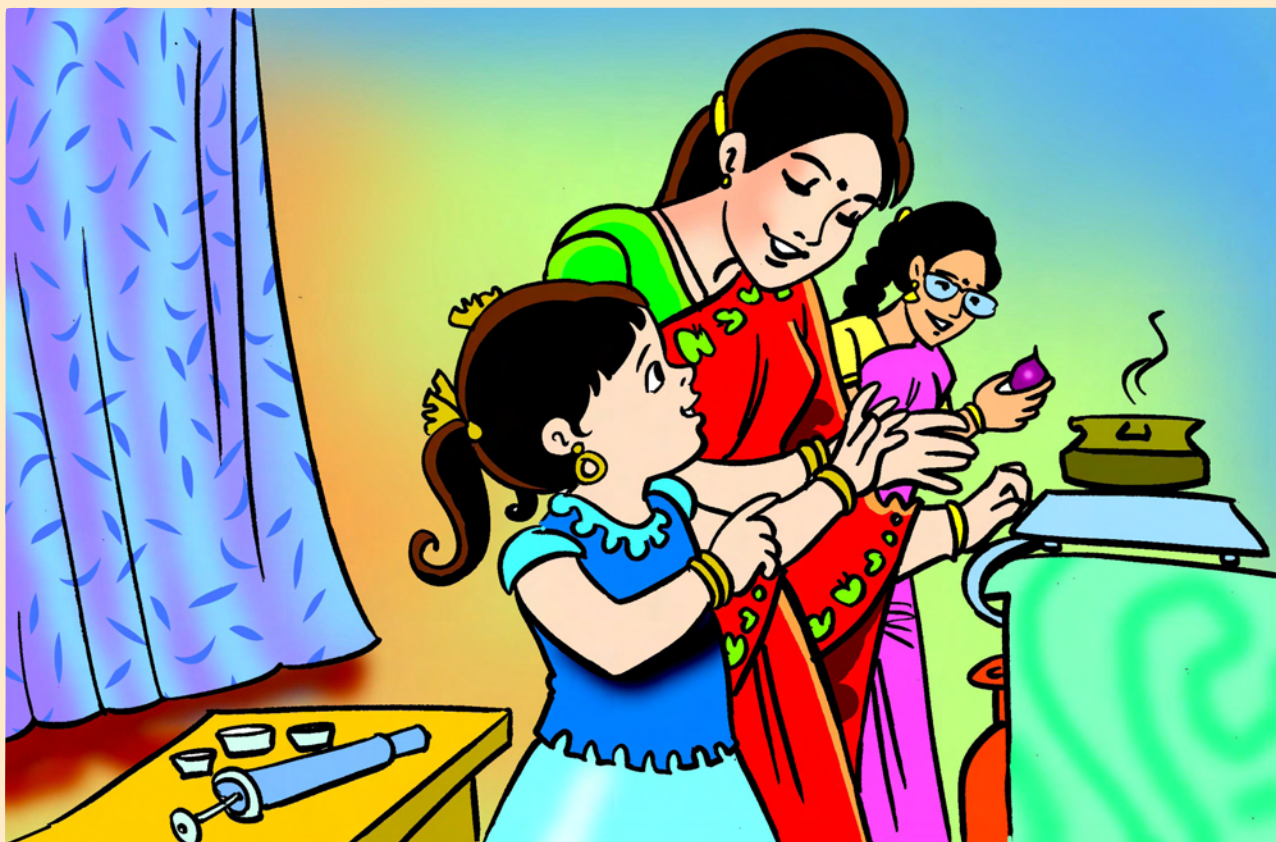
“What am I going to do, Aunty? I can’t use these colours for my party – my friends could fall sick because of them!”

Dulaari sounded sad and disappointed. “Aren’t there some other colours that we could use?” she wondered. All of a sudden she remembered the stains she had made on her mother’s apron and had a great idea! “But, of course, we could use colours from the kitchen – surely they are not harmful,” she exclaimed.

Excited with her discovery, Dulaari convinced her mother and Aunty to help her make natural colours for her Holi party. They spent a fun-filled afternoon mixing turmeric with flour for a yellow powder, boiling beetroots for a bright pink and getting *mehndi* powder for the green!

‘This time,’ thought Dulaari, ‘mine will be a colourful but completely safe Holi because I’ve made the colours myself and they all come from mother’s kitchen!’

- Manisha Gutman





# LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly; devils fall because of their gravity.

- G.K. Chesterton



A Mushroom goes to a dance and walks up to a girl and asks her to dance. "I'm not dancing with you," she replies. "Aw, come on..." the mushroom says. "Why not? I'm a fungi!" (Fun guy)



Tina: What gift did you get from your grandfather on your birthday?

Rahul: A mouth organ. It's the best present I've ever had.

Tina: Why?

Rahul: My mum gives me extra pocket money every week not to play it!

Mom: Why aren't you doing very well in history?

Ranjit: Because the teacher keeps asking about things that happened before I was born!



Rahul: Dad, will you do my maths for me tonight?

Dad: No, son, it wouldn't be right.

Rahul: Well, you could try.

## DUSHTU DATTU

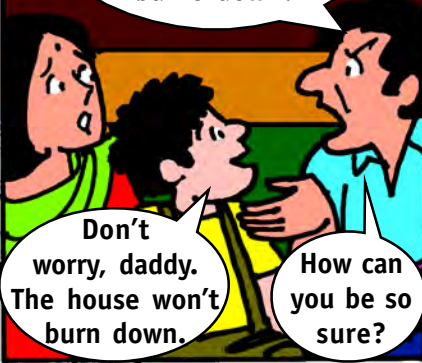
Dattu and family are off on a week-long holiday. Suddenly –

Oh-oh! I'm not sure whether I turned off the valve of the gas cylinder.



Dattu's father flares up.

How could you forget such an important thing? What if it explodes and the house burns down?



Don't worry, daddy. The house won't burn down.

How can you be so sure?



Because I just remembered that I've forgotten to turn off the bathroom tap!



# THE GENTLE GIANT

**L**ong, long ago there was a beautiful land filled with great mountains, woody forests, lovely lakes and the prettiest gardens you would have ever seen. The people were so happy, and the children played near the woods and at the foothills of the mountains. The air was filled with a lovely fragrance from the pretty flowers that grew around the countryside. Some of the children were quite adventurous and used to try and climb the mountain sides. But they could never reach the top of the mountains.

There was only one thing wrong in this happy little village. The food used to go missing! The cakes that were left on the window to cool would just disappear. The vegetables that grew in the garden would be plucked out and taken away. The people of the village used to hear booming noises from the mountains and would hurriedly shut their windows and doors fearing that it would rain. But the wind blew peacefully and it would be as calm as ever. The village would sometimes shake and tremble, but the people thought it was part of Nature, but they could never figure it out.

The families used to picnic near the lake which was filled to overflowing with fish, water insects, frogs and quaint little toadstools. The parents warned their children never to touch the toadstools as some of them were poisonous. But they looked so pretty and the children were quite fascinated with them. It was a bright sunny day and the families in the village decided to go for a picnic.

They all gathered together with picnic hampers of mouth-watering goodies. The children were so excited and happy that they tumbled over themselves to carry the heavy baskets, though their parents did not let them. So, in the midst of happy chattering and laughter, they made their way to the lake. They stopped there for a rest and one of the bolder children suggested that they could climb just halfway up the mountain. The parents agreed since it was harmless and the bigger children ran off full tilt before their parents changed their minds.

The smaller kids with their parents settled down on a large patch of green grass and opened out their picnic

baskets. As they shared their delicious food, they laughed and chatted happily about what they were going to cook for dinner as they handed out fragrant cakes and sandwiches. But suddenly it grew dark as if the sun had been blotted out; they all looked up in fear and astonishment. It had been such a sunny day; was the sky now going to open up and drench them? they wondered.

Instead, the shadow over them moved and they saw to their surprise and dismay, their children clutched by a huge giant! The adventurous kids who had climbed up the mountain had discovered a big cave there. The parents shouted and tried to throw whatever they had in their hands at the giant. The children screamed and clutched their parents in fear.

Then the giant spoke and the mountains trembled as his voice echoed around. He said, "Don't be afraid. I am Jumble and I've been living here for a long time". The parents then realized that it was Jumble the giant who was carrying the children in his arms. He gently set them down and they ran to their parents.

"Aha," said the chief of the village, "So, you're the one who has been stealing our food?"

"Yes, my cake was missing the other day," said his wife. All the villagers started talking together and accused poor Jumble of taking away this, that and the other.

Jumble hung his head and said softly, "I was hungry and there's not much food in the woods and the mountains. Please forgive me."

But the villagers were angry. "You've spoilt our lovely picnic. Just go away and don't trouble us any more." Jumble looked as if he was going to cry and turned away and climbed up to his cold home in the cave. The villagers quickly packed up their picnic hampers and rushed back to the safety of their homes.

The villagers did not find anything missing from that day on and went about their work



peacefully. But Jumble sat alone on a cliff and looked down at the villagers. Sometimes they used to have a big glowing bonfire and would gather around and dance and sing. Then they would have a lovely feast. The smells of the delicious food would waft and Jumble would suddenly feel hungry and sad. 'No one loves me, I am so alone,' he would think. All the boys would go near the mountains to fish in the lake near the foothills. Their parents would warn them not to climb the mountains, as they were afraid of Jumble. But Jumble was a gentle giant and would never harm anyone.

Then, one day Jumble set out to travel over the mountains to find another home. He had decided that if the villagers were not going to be his friends, then he had no reason to stay there. Besides, there was also very little for him to eat. So he packed whatever he had and started climbing up to the steepest and highest part of the mountains. Then he heard a shrill scream.

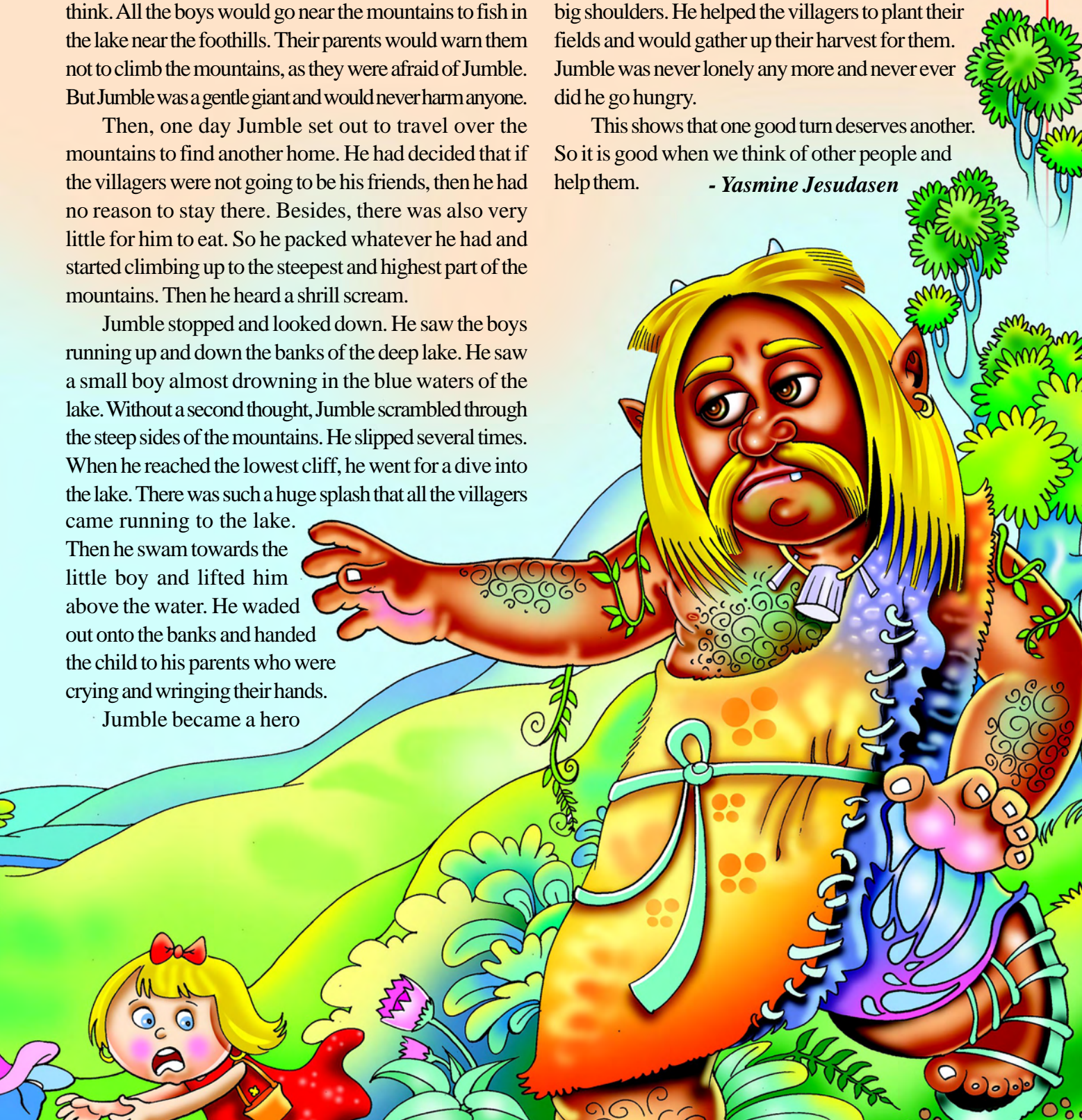
Jumble stopped and looked down. He saw the boys running up and down the banks of the deep lake. He saw a small boy almost drowning in the blue waters of the lake. Without a second thought, Jumble scrambled through the steep sides of the mountains. He slipped several times. When he reached the lowest cliff, he went for a dive into the lake. There was such a huge splash that all the villagers came running to the lake. Then he swam towards the little boy and lifted him above the water. He waded out onto the banks and handed the child to his parents who were crying and wringing their hands.

Jumble became a hero

overnight. He was the talk of the town and the superman of the village. All the villagers presented him with food and huge clothes. Jumble was so happy that he just smiled and laughed so loudly that the mountains shook. From that day on, Jumble used to take part in all the village festivals. He would carry the kids to school on his great big shoulders. He helped the villagers to plant their fields and would gather up their harvest for them. Jumble was never lonely any more and never ever did he go hungry.

This shows that one good turn deserves another. So it is good when we think of other people and help them.

- Yasmine Jesudasen



# GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM



**H**arischandra was now in a fix. He said, “How can I give you anything more when I am left with nothing?”

“That’s your business. But I’m not going to waive my claim to *dakshina*,” said the Brahmin quite curtly.

“What do you expect as *dakshina*?” asked the king.

The Brahmin demanded an amount of gold that was considerable.

“All right,” said the king, “give me time and I’ll earn the amount and give it to you.”

The king returned to the palace, sad and pale. “What’s the matter with you?” asked Queen Shaivya. The king told her everything and added, “Tomorrow we must leave the palace, as it is no longer ours!”

Early in the morning the king, queen, and their son Rohit left the palace. Men and women flocked to them, weeping. But the king asked them to go back.

The old Brahmin met them as soon as they were out of the city. “Give me a month’s time. Look upon me as one who is indebted to you,” said the king.

They reached the city of Varanasi. Whatever the king earned was just enough to sustain the three of them. A month passed. The old Brahmin appeared and demanded his dues.

“O Brahmin! You cannot say that the full month has passed, since the sun has not yet set over for this day,” said the king.

“I shall return soon after sunset,” warned the Brahmin as he left them.

To the pensive king, Queen Shaivya said, “Please sell me away as a slave. The amount you receive might enable you to settle your debt.”

The proposal shocked the king. The queen of a great dynasty to be sold as a slave? The thought drove him almost mad!

“It is most important that you fulfil your promise. There’ll be nothing more satisfying to me than to be helpful to you. Please do not hesitate,” said the queen.

The king stood on the roadside and shouted: “Ho! Is there anybody willing to buy my wife?” Passers-by collected there. Out of them was Viswamitra, now assuming another figure.

“My wife is old. I need a woman to do my household chores. I shall buy your wife,” he said.

Then, looking at Queen Shaivya, he said again, “I’m prepared to give the amount that a woman with the highest signs of virtue deserves. I can see that this woman has all such signs.”

## 36. HARISCHANDRA COMES OUT OF ALL TESTS

The Brahmin pushed the price into the dazed king's hands and commanded the queen to follow him.

Prince Rohit broke into tears and ran behind his mother.

"O my master, won't you be pleased to buy my son? It will be hard for me to work in your household without him. You can give him some work. I assure you that he'll do it sincerely and honestly," pleaded Shaivya.

The Brahmin reluctantly paid some more money to Harischandra for the boy.

As the queen and prince departed, the king fainted for a moment. But Viswamitra, taking the form of the old Brahmin, appeared there soon and reminded the king that the sun had already set.

The king handed out to him the money he had received as the price for his wife and son. The Brahmin counted the amount and said it still fell short of his demand.

"Wait a little. I'll offer myself for sale," said the king. He once again called out to passers-by to buy him.

The king was employed to collect fees from those who came to the cremation ground to bury their dead.

Days passed. The queen and her son continued to work in the Brahmin's household. One day, while the boy was climbing an old tree to gather dry firewood, he was bitten by a snake. He fell down dead. Shaivya came running to him.

"You cannot waste your time over a dead son. Go back to your work. You may take the corpse to the cremation ground at night," the Brahmin ordered.

It was midnight when Shaivya carried her son's body to the cremation ground, all by herself.

"Who are you? Pay the fee before cremating the corpse!" said Harishchandra who was guarding the ground.

"I don't have any money to pay. I shall cremate my son's body myself!" said the weeping queen.

Her voice startled Harischandra. He came near the corpse and removed the piece of cloth covering it. Seeing that it was Rohit who lay dead, he gave out a cry of horror.

The queen now recognised him. Together they

bemoaned their fate. They then lighted the funeral pyre for Rohit and decided to sacrifice themselves in it.

But when they were about to lie down on Rohit's pyre, a golden light illumined the place.

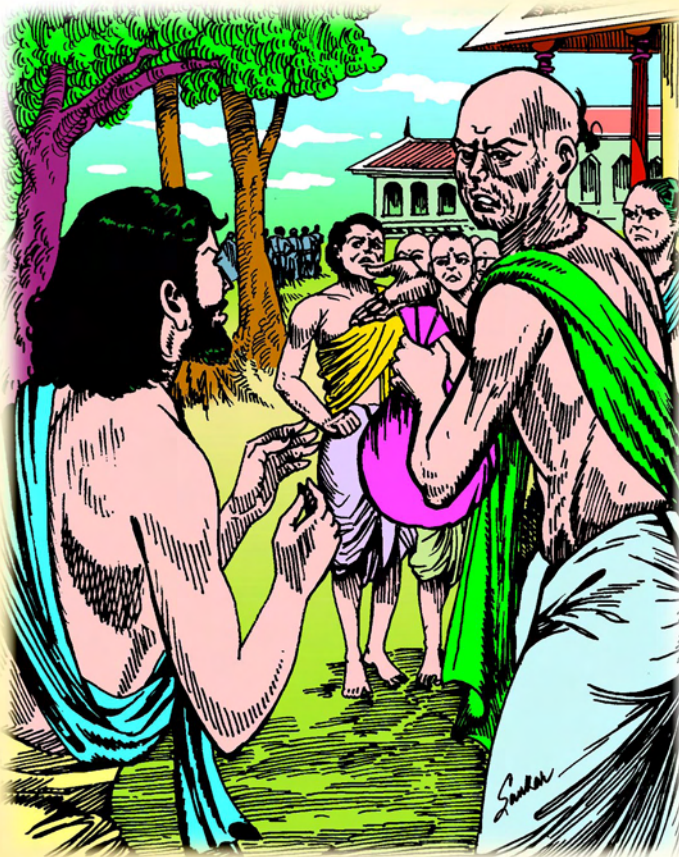
To their great surprise, they saw the Divine Mother appearing before them. Behind Her appeared several gods and goddesses. The old Brahmin was there, too, now revealing himself as Viswamitra.

To the great joy of the royal couple, Rohit sat up as if he had woken up from deep sleep.

"You've stood the most severe test, O King!" said the Divine Mother. Indra, the king of gods, stepped forward and said that King Harischandra and Queen Shaivya had earned their right to dwell in heaven. All this because they had never for a moment lost their faith in the Divine Mother.

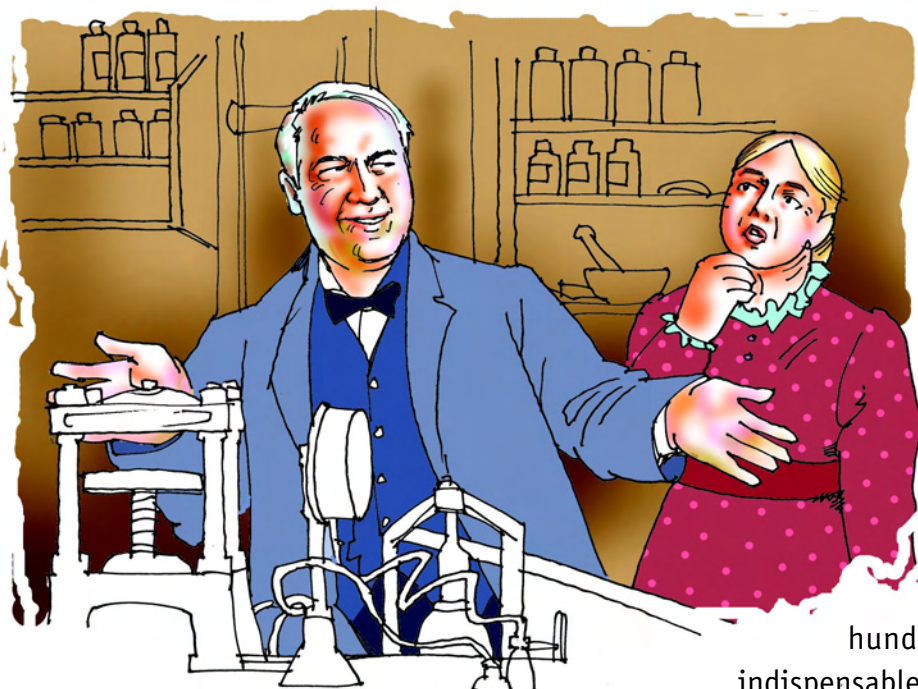
Harischandra, Shaivya and Rohit returned to Ayodhya. In due course of time, Rohit succeeded to the throne. The king and queen ascended the heaven. The saga of Harischandra remains immortal as an illustration of truthfulness.

*(Concluded)*





# JOURNEY TO THE HAPPIEST PLACE



**T**homas Alva Edison was, without doubt, one of the greatest inventors the world has known. Born in Ohio, on February 11, 1847, he obtained US patents for as many as 1,093 inventions by the time he breathed his last on October 18, 1931 on the anniversary of his invention of the light bulb.

While his most famous inventions are the transmitter and the receiver for the automatic telegraph, phonograph and the incandescent lamp, his genius brought about

hundreds of devices that have become indispensable elements in our lifestyle today. But

did he ever think himself a genius? He had said, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration... A genius is only a talented person who had done all of his homework."

We may or may not agree with his definition of a genius, but his own life was a demonstration of hard work done with concentration and determination.

"You have been working continuously in your laboratory for years. You need a break. What about going for a holiday?" his wife suggested one day.

"A good idea. But where do I go?" asked Edison.

His wife recited a list of fine places in Switzerland, Scotland, England and Italy. She also described the special qualities of each of these places and then said, "Tell me your choice and I will make arrangements through our friends for your travel and stay."

"Well," said Edison thoughtfully, "I cannot choose. Each of these places has its attractions. How do I know which will suit me most?"

"I will give you a solution to that problem. You reflect on those virtues and decide which of them would make you most happy. Then go there!" advised the conscientious lady.

"An excellent idea. Where I will feel most happy, right? Let me think," said Edison enthusiastically.

As they sat down for dinner, the lady asked her husband, "So, have you thought of the place that is likely to make you most happy?"

"I have decided on the place that is sure to make me most happy," answered Edison and he added, "I will proceed there tomorrow, be sure. By the way, do not bother to make any arrangements for my journey. I can do that myself."

"Good. I know you never lose time hesitating," said his wife. "And, of course, you are smart enough to do everything by yourself," commented his happy wife.

Next day, Edison's wife was busy looking after some guests. But she did not forget about her husband's proposed trip. She was curious to know about his choice. But there was no sign of Edison preparing for a journey. He had as usual gone over to his laboratory.

Once the guests had left, Mrs. Edison went over to her husband's laboratory and found him engrossed in his experiments.

"When do you wish to start?"

"Where?"

"Have you forgotten? Are you not supposed to proceed to the place that would make you most happy!"

"That is exactly where I am!" said Edison with a broad smile.

(MD)

## ALIENS ON THE EARTH

There were 3 little alien dudes in a little green space ship. All of a sudden they crashed on earth. The first little dude was purple, the second yellow and the third blue.

The little purple dude walked into an opera house and heard "mi,mi,mi" "mi,mi,mi" and got stuck saying "mi,mi,mi" "mi,mi,mi".

The little yellow dude walked into the purple cow and heard "fork and knife" "fork and knife" and got stuck saying "fork and knife" "fork and knife".

The little purple dude walked into a candy shop and heard "goody goody gum drops" "goody goody gum drops" and got stuck saying "goody gum drops" "goody goody gum drops".

On their way back to the space ship, a policeman stopped them and said, "There has been a murder and, since you are new to this town, I suspect you did it. Okay! Let's get this straight. Which one of you did it?"

The little purple dude said "mi,mi,mi" and the policeman said "With what?" And the little yellow dude said "fork and knife".

The policeman said, "I'm sorry but you're going to jail."

The little blue dude said, "Goody goody gum drops!"

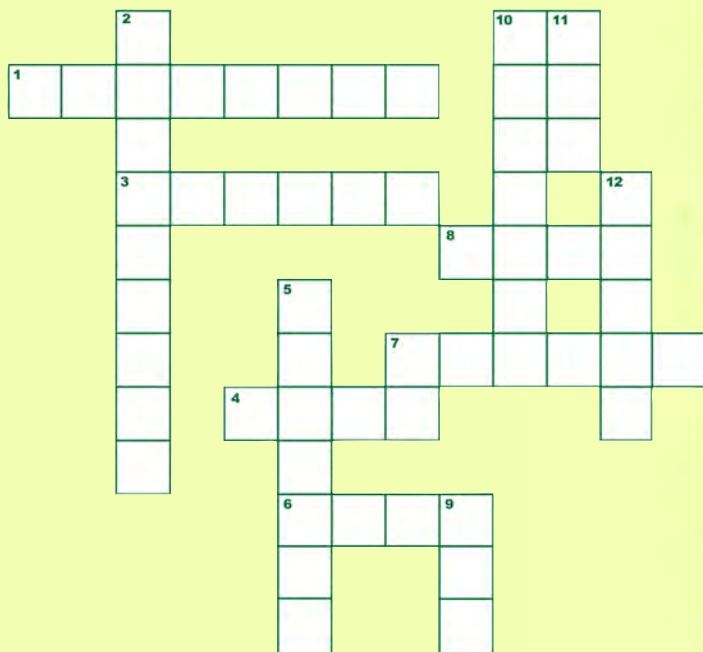


# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## CROSSWORD ON BIRDS



Here is a crossword on birds. The clues below will help you solve it.



### Across:

1. Birds lay eggs during the \_\_\_\_\_ season (8).
3. The baby of an eagle (6).
4. The flightless bird of New Zealand (4).
6. A bird of prey like an eagle (4).
7. A sweetly singing yellow bird (6).
8. The baby cuckoo tries to \_\_\_\_\_ its foster brothers out of the nest (4).

### Down:

2. Not binoculars for bird watching, but \_\_\_\_\_ for stargazing (9).

5. Baby hen (7).
9. Cuckoo lays her \_\_\_\_\_ in the crow's nest (3).
10. An Antarctic black/white bird whose male takes care of the egg (7).
11. What birds can do, which a human can't! (3).
12. Birds of prey have \_\_\_\_\_, pointed and hooked beaks (5)

- by R Vaasugi

## STICKER PUZZLE

Ashish, Christina, Elizabeth, Richard, and Lily had 3 dozen stickers altogether.

- ☐ Each person had at least 5 stickers.
  - ☐ Christina had 6 stickers.
  - ☐ Elizabeth had 2 more stickers than what Christina had.
  - ☐ Richard had twice as many stickers as Ashish.
  - ☐ Lily had 3 fewer stickers than Richard.
- How many stickers did each person have?

### SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD:

**Across:** 1. Breeding, 3. Eaglet, 4. Kiwi, 6. Kite, 7. Canary, 8. Push.

**Down:** 2. Telescope, 5. Chicken, 9. Egg, 10. Penguin, 11. Fly, 12. Sharp.

### STICKER PUZZLE

Ashish - 5; Christina - 6; Elizabeth - 8; Richard - 10; Lily - 7; Total - 36.



FROM MAHARASHTRA

# THE MARBLE PALACE

**S**omnathpur was a small kingdom in a valley below the western ghats. Most of the mountain rivulets flowed through the valley and the kingdom was a picture of green everywhere. The people had enough and more water for farming and for household use. King Somdev was of adventuresome nature. He visited the neighbouring kingdoms and entered into pacts of friendship with all of them. He had full faith in his ministers who carried on a smooth administration.

The king had only one son. Prince Somraj grew up into a handsome youth. He trained himself in archery and horse-riding and, in course of time, he too became a lover of adventure.

Suddenly, he was taken over by a wanderlust. He went to his father. "I wish to go out of the kingdom and wander about the country. I shall go alone and come back safe."

King Somdev hesitated to give him permission. "Why should you go alone, my son?" he queried, sounding a bit anxious about his safety. "Take a few bodyguards with you. Or, how about your friends? Won't some of them be eager to go with you?"

"No, father, it is my desire to go alone," replied the prince. "I shall take good care of myself, I assure you, father."

"Take your mother's permission and then come to me," said the king.

Prince Somraj went to his mother and told her what his father had said. "If you assure me that you won't get into any trouble and would come back safe, you may go, though frankly I'm not very happy." The prince touched her feet and went back to his father.

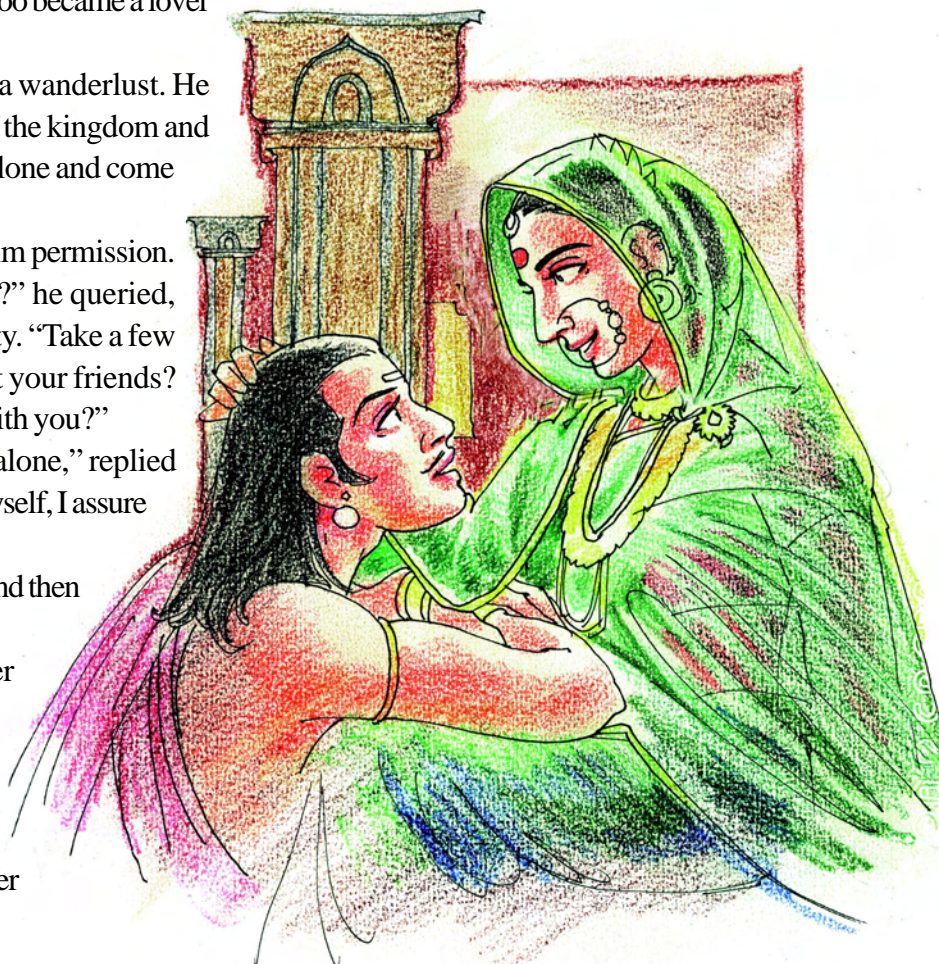
"When do you want to leave?" King Somdev asked.

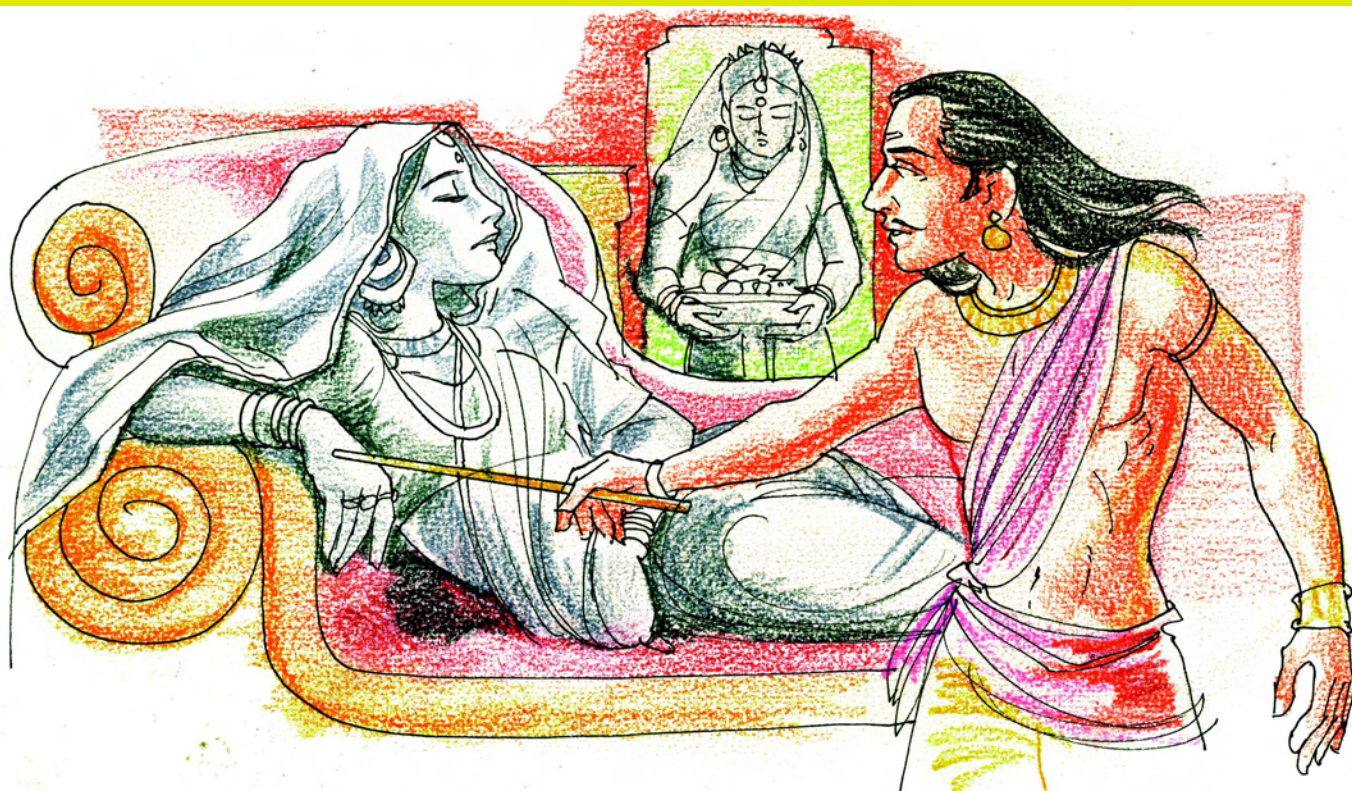
"Tomorrow is new year's day," said the prince.

"You'll be escorted by our soldiers till our borders," said the king.

Next day, the prince mounted his white steed and started. At the palace gates, six soldiers joined him. Once they reached the border, the prince waited till the soldiers turned back and rode off. Now he was on his own. He was not in any hurry, so he rode slowly looking around and taking in all the sights. Everything appeared new.

Days passed. He would often stop by rivulets





enjoying the gurgle of the swift-flowing water. He would even plunge into the cold water and feel refreshed on coming out. Whenever he came upon fruits hanging from trees, he would climb to the branches, sit there and eat the fruits.

Suddenly, one day, he came upon a wide river. He watched the water flow by for a few moments and decided to cross it on horseback. In no time he was on the other bank and saw in front of him a dense forest. He rode slowly through tall trees.

When the horse and the rider reached an open ground, the horse suddenly stopped as if it had sensed something. It was then that the prince's attention was attracted to a huge building. It looked like a palace built in red marble.

Somraj saw a tall wide gate, where a drum hung with a gong. He could not see any gatekeeper. He took the gong and beat the drum. Nobody came from the palace to enquire who the visitor was. It looked strange. The prince decided to go in. He tied his horse to a nearby red marble pillar and walked in.

His eyes now met with many bodyguards, royal servants and men who looked like courtiers. But there was no life in them, no movement. They appeared as if

they had turned statues while walking or engaged in some chore. He also saw soldiers, horses, and elephants – all of them looking like marble statues.

Somraj entered a room. It was full of weapons like bows and arrows, swords and daggers. They were real, not made of marble, and were shining. There were a few watchmen who had turned statues. The next room was a big hall. At one end he saw two thrones. In one sat the king in regal dress, while the other had the queen wearing glittering jewellery. Some of the chairs on either side of the hall had been occupied by probably the king's ministers. No one was moving. Everybody was looking like marble statues.

The prince moved along a long passage which took him to a room where he saw a lovely looking woman on a cot of decorated marble. Two maids stood still near the cot as if waiting for orders from the princess.

On a nearby table he saw two wands – one made of silver and the other made of gold. Somraj picked up the golden wand and went to the marble cot and touched the princess's hand.

Lo and behold! He heard a sweet voice. "Who's that?" The prince saw the young woman get up from her marble cot, looking at him with dazed eyes.

"I'm Prince Somraj of Somnathpur. I was bewildered when I saw everybody and everything here turned into marble statues. I'm sorry if I have intruded into your chambers, but tell me the mystery of this marble palace?" said the prince.

"It's a long story, O Prince," said the beautiful woman, now standing beside him.

"I'm Princess Ratnakumari. My father is the King of Ratnagiri. For long years, this land belonged to a demon, who had left the forest. When my father established his kingdom and built this palace in the centre of the city, Ratnapuri, we never knew of the existence of the demon. But one day he returned, and was furious that his land had been encroached upon. He began attacking the palace. Our army suffered heavy losses and my father, at last, decided to explain to the demon, how he came to build the palace as the first step towards founding the kingdom in the valley below the mountain range called Ratnagiri."

"What was the demon's reaction?" asked Prince Somraj curiously.

"Well, the demon promised that he would not trouble the people of Ratnagiri but put forth a certain condition," said Princess Ratnakumari.

"What was the condition?" asked Somraj, anxiously.

"He demanded that I be given in marriage to him!" said the princess.

"Where's the demon now? I shall kill him so that he won't bother you again. Nobody has escaped my arrows!" said the prince flexing his muscles.

"We don't know where he is," said the princess," but when my father refused to meet his demand, the demon, who had magical powers, took out a silver magic wand and began touching every animate and inanimate object in front of him. He did it with such great speed that my father, his bodyguards or soldiers could do nothing to stop him. He uttered a curse as he went out, threatening that

everything and everybody would turn lifeless before sunset remain so till a prince came along, took out the golden wand, touched the water kept in every room, sprinkled it all over, and touched the objects with the golden wand. Come with me, I shall help you revive everybody."

Prince Somraj first touched the bowl in the princess's chamber. The princess sprinkled the water on the two maids and the prince touched them with the golden wand. They both sprang to life. Ratnakumari then led Somraj to the Royal Court where they continued the exercise. The king and queen and the ministers came back to life. When they were told about Prince Somraj, they were very happy.

One of the ministers said, "Princess, you stay back here with your parents, I shall go with Prince Somraj and wake up everybody else."

Soon, the palace came to life with all kinds of sounds and music.



Meanwhile, the king called his ministers and courtiers. "We have to decide first what we should do if the demon were to come back," said the king.

Prince Somraj, who was seated next to the king, stood up and said, "Even if he comes, as the demon had left his two wands here, we have only to ensure that he does not get them back. I've a feeling that without the wands, he will be powerless, and the army here will be able to overpower him."

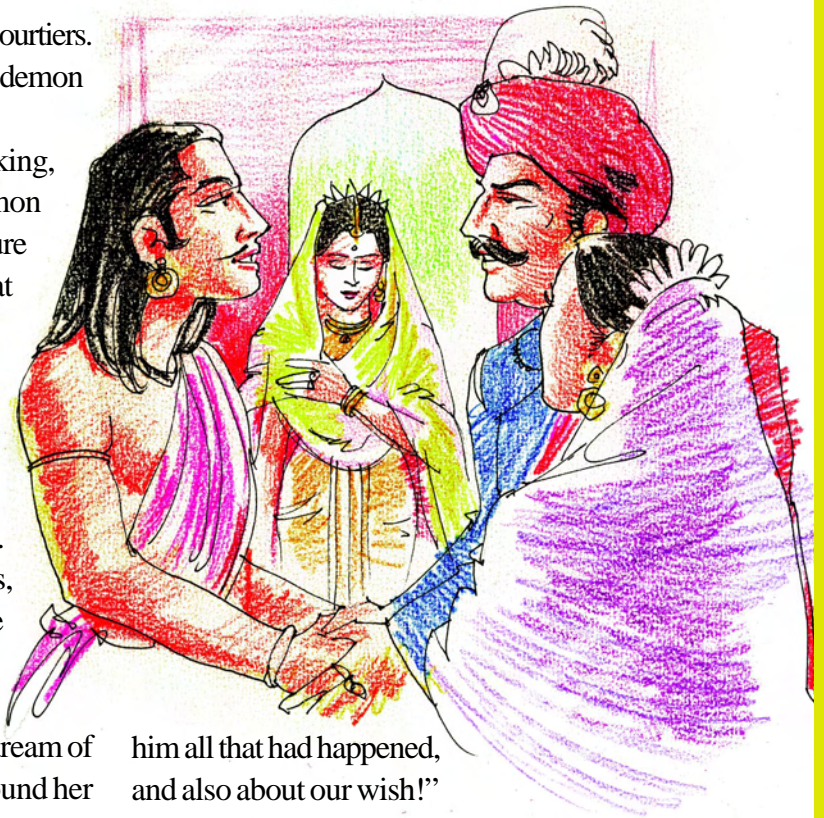
The chief minister said, "Prince Somraj is right. He has uncanny intelligence and I suggest that he remains with us for ever."

The king smiled. "That will not be a problem. If the prince will agree to marrying our princess, he'll be with us always. He will also succeed me to the throne."

Prince Somraj got up once again. "Your majesty, I had come out of my kingdom with a dream of finding a bride for myself. And I think I have found her here! With your permission and that of all those present here, let me go back to my kingdom and get the approval of my father and mother to this alliance."

Everybody in the court hall now stood up and hailed Prince Somraj.

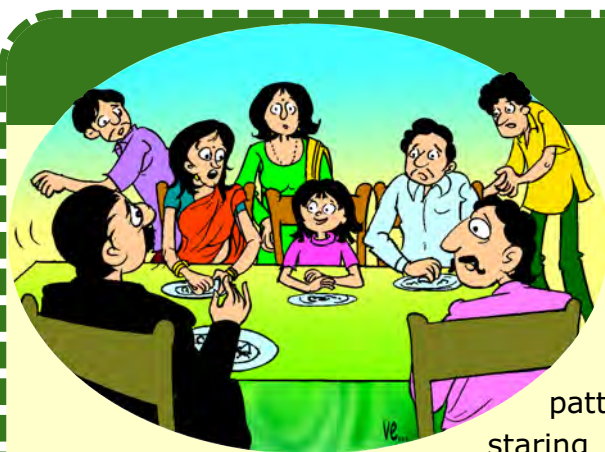
"Prince Somraj, you will not go alone. My chief minister will accompany you, meet your father and tell



him all that had happened, and also about our wish!"

King Somdev and his queen were only too happy when they were told about the impending wedding of their son with Princess Ratnakumari. The king and queen left for Ratnapuri with a large entourage. What they witnessed was a grand wedding.

For several years, Ratnagiri was spared of the sight of the demon.



## AT A PARTY...

A guy hosted a dinner party for people from work, including his boss.

After they all sat down for dinner, the host's three-year-old girl stared at her father's boss sitting across. She could hardly eat her food.

The man checked his tie, felt his face for food, patted his hair in place, but nothing stopped her from staring at him. He tried his best to just ignore her, but

finally it was too much for him. He asked her, "Why are you staring at me, little one?" Everyone at the table had noticed her behaviour and they went quiet waiting for her response.

The little girl said, "My Daddy had said you drink like a fish, and I don't want to miss it!"

# GLIDING DOWN THROUGH CLOUDS



Once upon a time – that was in the mythical era - there lived in the kingdom of Crete an architect and sculptor called Daedalus, hailing from Greece. So recounts the great poet Homer in his Greek epic, the *Iliad*. King Minos was very proud of this genius. He had built a labyrinth for his king to house an enigmatic creature called the Minotaur, which was half man half bull.

As days went by, Daedalus grew tired of Crete and pined to return to Greece. But the king was very fond of him and would not let him go. So the skilful and clever man made two pairs of wings, one for himself and the other for his son and assistant, Icarus. With the aid of these innovative wings he planned to escape from Crete.

Indeed, one day he attached the wings to his own and to his son's shoulders with wax. "Son, do not fly too near the sun," cautioned the father before they took off.

Young Icarus was thrilled that he was able to fly like a bird. Alas, in his youthful excitement, he forgot his father's warning. He flew too near the sun, the wax melted and the poor lad fell into the sea.

Were Daedalus and Icarus mere symbols for man's early desire to fly and emulate the birds? Read the following story.

More than two hundred years ago, a solitary prisoner stood on a towering fortress wall. Like the legendary Daedalus, he too was dreaming and working out a way of escape. Could he not just jump off and float in the air and land safely

on the ground far below? He deeply pondered over the novel idea. It suddenly occurred to him that if he had something with which he could break his free fall in the air, he could then easily get away by leaping down. He made an innovative scheme for such an apparatus which would help him do so. But before he could execute his plan, he was unfortunately discovered by his captors.

Who was this bold and daring prisoner of war? He was none other than Andre Jacques Garnerin,



born in Paris on January 31, 1769. As a young man, he studied physics and was passionately interested in the science of hot air ballooning. When he turned twenty-four in 1793, he joined the French army of Napoleon Bonaparte where he encouraged the use of balloons for military purposes. But before long, in the course of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, he was captured and taken prisoner and confined in an old fortress.

It is always the dream of prisoners of war to escape from captivity. Andre Garnerin was no exception. He forthwith began toying with the idea and soon devised a plan of using what is known as a parachute as a means to jump off the high prison walls. "The love of liberty naturally gave rise to many projects to release myself from the rigorous detention. To surprise the vigilance of the sentries,... throw myself from the ramparts without being injured, were schemes that afforded recreation," he explained later.

However, during his three years of confinement, he could never make use of his invention to escape from the high ramparts of the prison. So, finally, when he was released, he continued to work on his unique idea giving it a more concrete shape. "After deciding on the size of the parachute for descending from a rampart or a precipice, by natural sequence I devised the size and form of a parachute for a descent of several thousand feet by an aeronaut," said Garnerin. Now the bold adventurer resolved to try out his invention for himself.

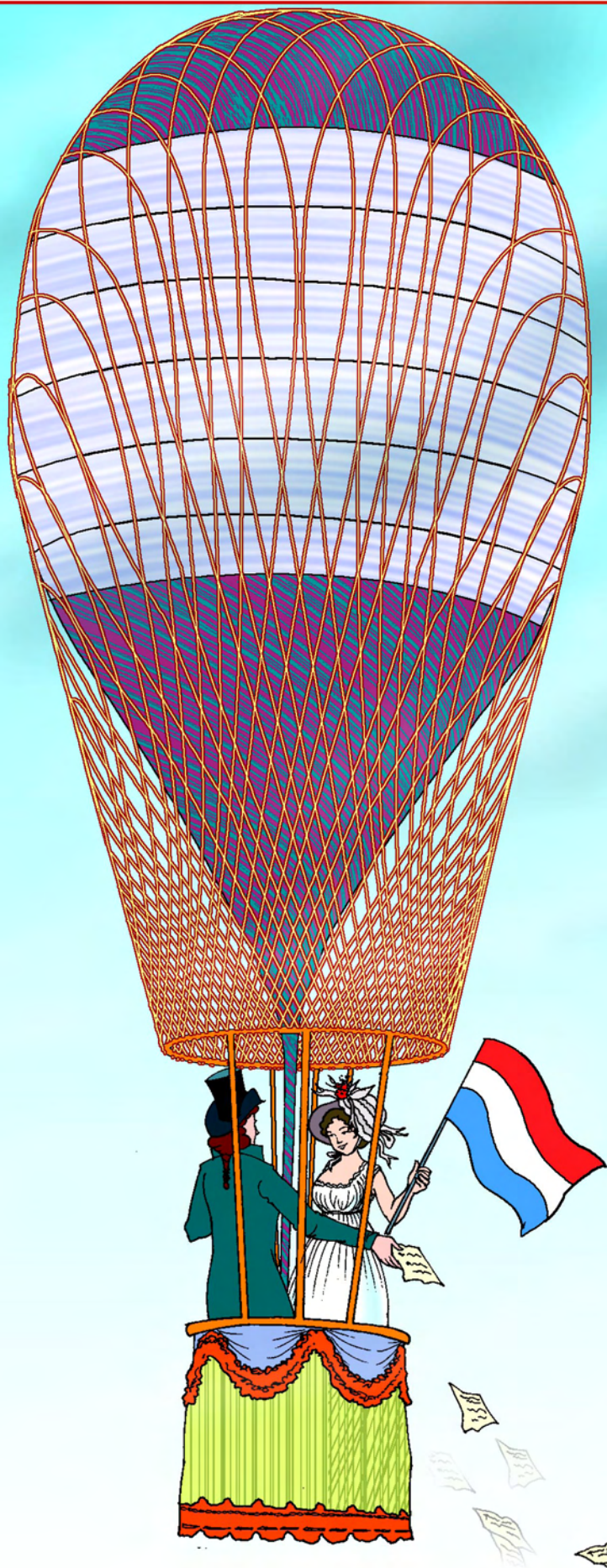
The exciting news spread through Paris like wild fire. On the bright morning of October 22, 1797 Andre Jacques Garnerin, accompanied by his young wife, Jeanne, who was already famous as being the first woman ever to go up in a balloon, arrived at Parc de Monceau in Paris. A large crowd had already gathered to watch the historic event that had no precedence. A man was going to jump off from a great height. Would he be able to survive?

The brave aeronaut climbed into the gondola, the basket, attached to a hot air balloon. He then inspected the parachute. It was a strange-looking contraption, conical in shape and a framework of stout wooden ribs and lines over which stretched, tight and firm, a large piece of canvas. It did look like a huge umbrella. He then gave a hand to his wife helping her to get into the basket. Then he signalled his assistants to cast off. Slowly the hot air hydrogen balloon rose into the sky with the gondola and its two occupants swaying in the air below.

The great gathering tilted back their heads to follow the fascinating object's upward journey. They wondered at the temerity of the man who was taking the risk of entrusting his life, or at least his limbs to a device which had not been tested before. Was it full proof? The balloon had now ascended to an altitude of almost 3,000 feet. A buzz of conversation could be heard rising from the crowd. Slowly the daring aeronaut was seen climbing on to the rim of the gondola and stand there clinging on to one of the ropes which joined the basket to the net enclosing the balloon.

Now a hush came over men, women and children alike. There were some who still could not believe that they were about to witness a man who was going to jump to his own destruction. How his wife, who was seen shaking his hand and wishing him good luck could support him in this attempt, was beyond their understanding.

With a mighty brave leap Garnerin launched himself into space. A series of long deep sighs escaped from the crowd who were looking on with bated breath. Some faint-hearted women swooned and there were others who covered their eyes with their hands. But to their relief, the daring hero did not come hurtling down to his death. He seemed to be gently floating towards the ground. His body was being



jerked like a puppet on the end of its strings and the canopy was spiralling like mad. Will he be able to do it? A cloud of misgiving crossed in the minds of the onlookers.

As he came closer and closer to the ground, it was observed that the descent was becoming much faster than it had first appeared to be. A silence of apprehension fell over the crowd. There was suspense. What would happen now? How can a man strike the ground with that speed and not break every bone in his body? He could even die with the impact!

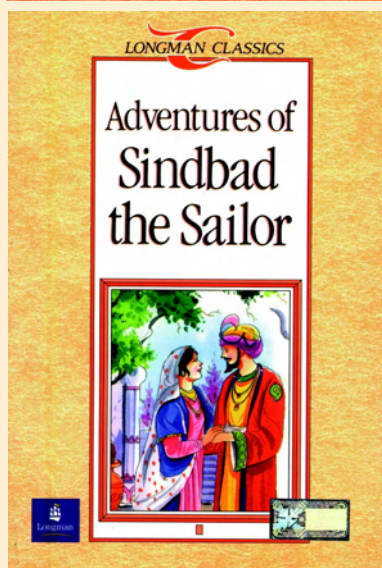
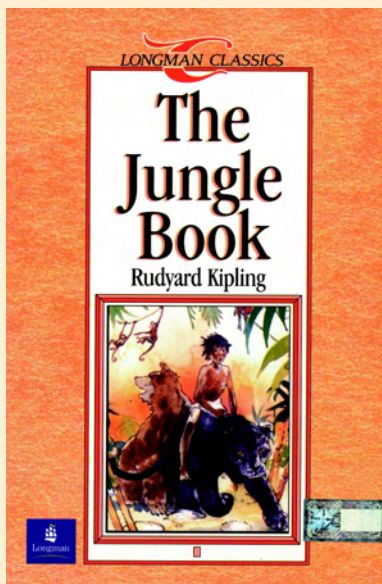
Andre Garnerin finally landed with a great thud that was audible throughout the park. He lay still for some moments. People anxiously hurried towards him. But before they could reach him, he was on his feet, his face glowing with the excitement of success and victory. He lifted up his hands acknowledging the cheers of the great crowd greeting him for being the world's first man to perform a parachute jump.

Later, Garnerin further perfected the parachute and made regular successful daring parachute jumps from even higher altitudes. His wife, Jeanne Genevieve, too earned the distinction of being the first woman to descend in a parachute— a feat she did at the age of 19 in 1798. Then the couple and Andre's niece Elizabeth together thrilled great gatherings by making several hot air balloon aerial voyages and parachute-jumping exhibitions all over Europe. Once, in London, he released a small parachute with a kitten suspended beneath. The parachute gently and gracefully floated onto the earth without the little cat having to spend off one of its nine lives.

Andre Jacques Garnerin died in 1823 after an accident while making balloon equipment in Paris. But by his invaluable invention, this great man of courage saved countless lives of future fliers when the parachute was later officially adopted by the Air Force.

(AKD)

# CLASSICS SIMPLIFIED FOR CHILDREN



**Longman Classics:** *Adventures of Sindbad the Sailor; Alice in Wonderland; The Jungle Book; Three Great Plays of Shakespeare; Stories from Shakespeare; Five Famous Fairy Tales; David Copperfield; Three Adventures of Sherlock Holmes; The Return of Sherlock Holmes.*

The publishers have done a commendable job with this venture, which seeks to bring the immortal literary classics to young readers in a suitably simplified and condensed format. Each book carries an introduction that gives us the details of the author, the work, and the social conditions prevalent at the time of its composition.

*David Copperfield* is a classic coming-of-age tale that explores social conditions in 19<sup>th</sup> century England through the eyes of the protagonist. The Longman Classics version does a good job of condensing the text without interfering with the flow of the story.

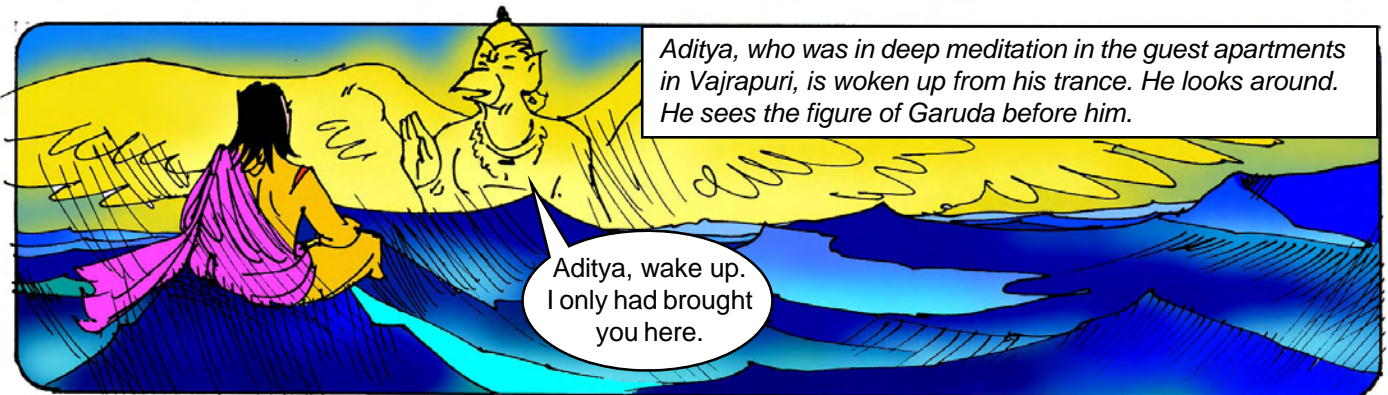
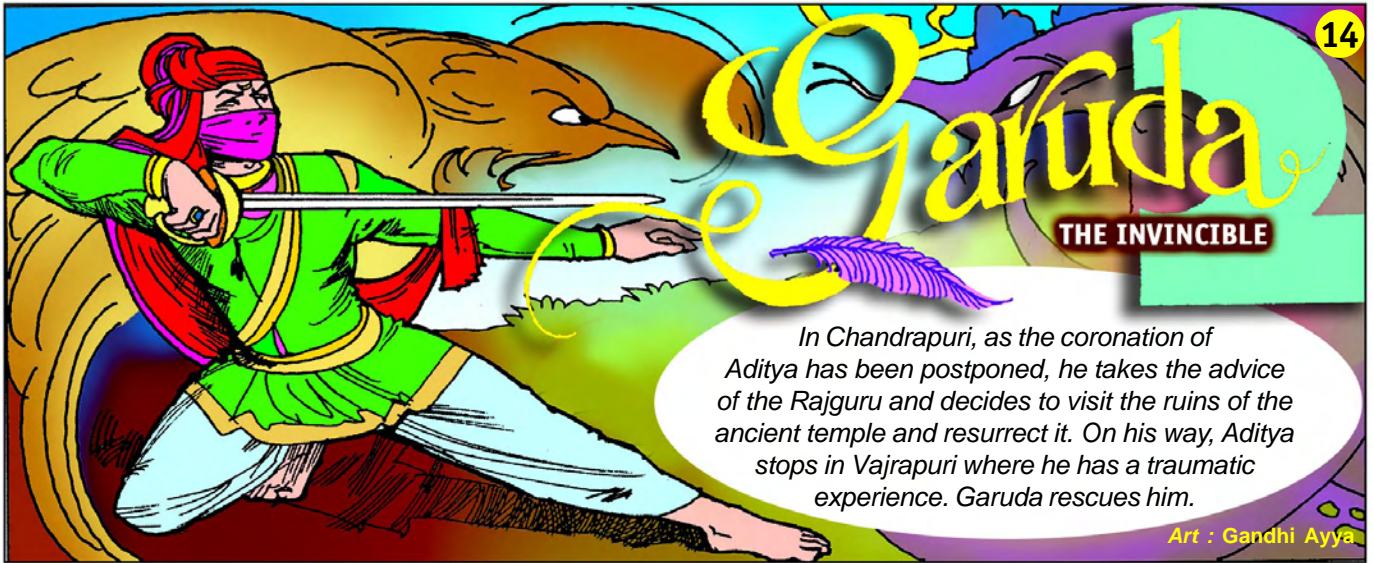
Sherlock Holmes, a brilliant fictional detective who makes his appearance in four novels and fifty-six short stories of the Scottish author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887, is one of the best known literary characters of all time. *Three Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* features three early Holmes stories 'The Speckled Band', 'The Five Orange Pips', and 'The Crown of Diamonds'. *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* features three stories from Conan Doyle's subsequent book of the same name. They are 'The Six Napoleons', 'The Norwood

Builder', and 'The Golden Glasses' (*The Adventure of the Golden Pinze-nez*). These thrilling tales are regarded as classics in the field of detective fiction.

William Shakespeare, the well-known Elizabethan playwright and poet, needs no introduction for students of English literature. Seven of his immortal plays (four tragedies, two comedies and one historical play) have been presented here in an abridged and simplified story format – *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* in *Three Great Plays of Shakespeare*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar* in *Stories from Shakespeare*.

*Five Famous Fairy Tales* introduces young readers to two stories each by the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen and an *Arabian Nights* tale. The stories are Grimms' 'The Table, the Donkey and the Stick' and 'The Prince and his Servants', Andersen's 'The Glass Box' and 'The White Birds', and 'The Fisherman and the Giant' from *The Arabian Nights*. Children are sure to enjoy this book. The same goes for the other children's classics featuring in this series – *The Jungle Book*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Adventures of Sindbad the Sailor* from *The Arabian Nights*.

- **Rajee Raman**

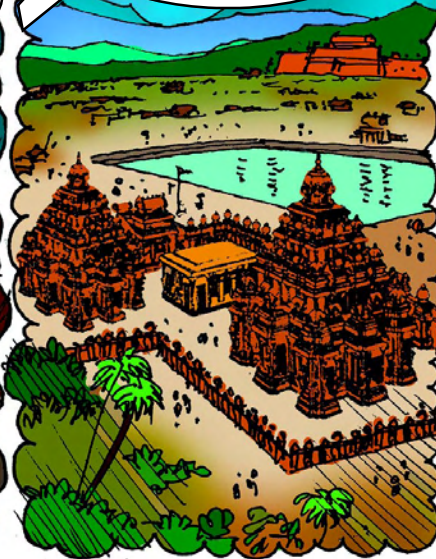


The voice continues his narration...

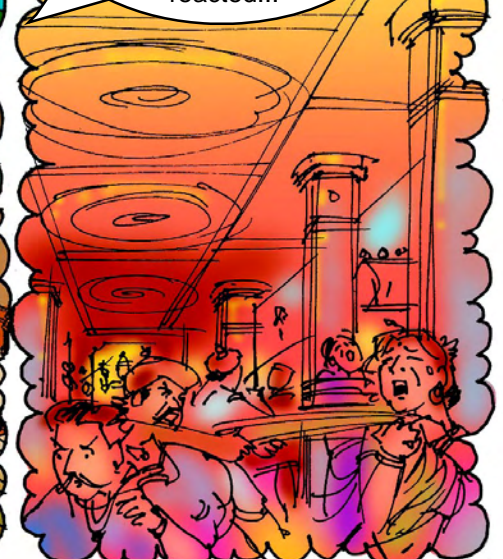
Below the mound where you sit is the ancient temple of Vishnu, in Amarpuri which was a vast kingdom. The rulers looked after the subjects with love and compassion...



Generations later, the then ruler was corrupt; the people were jealous of each other. The temple premises were misused...

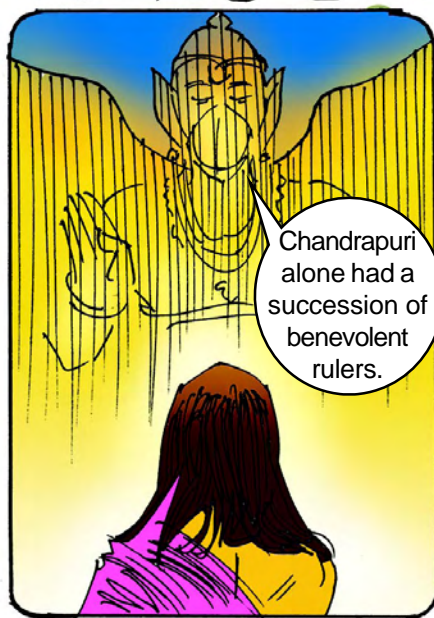


Devotees found it difficult to conduct their worship. Mother Earth could not tolerate the state of affairs, and reacted...





There was a violent earthquake; the temple and the capital city around were buried. The kingdom split into smaller regions which went into the hands of claimants.



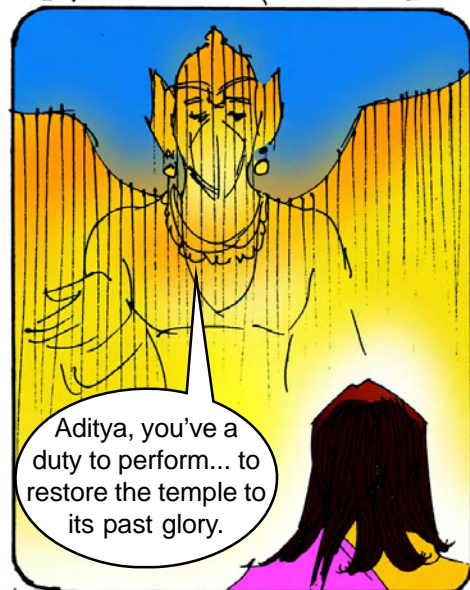
Chandrapuri alone had a succession of benevolent rulers.



Regions like Vajrapuri went through a lot of turmoil. Where the capital city existed, a hill arose...



You're standing on that hill.



Aditya, you've a duty to perform... to restore the temple to its past glory.

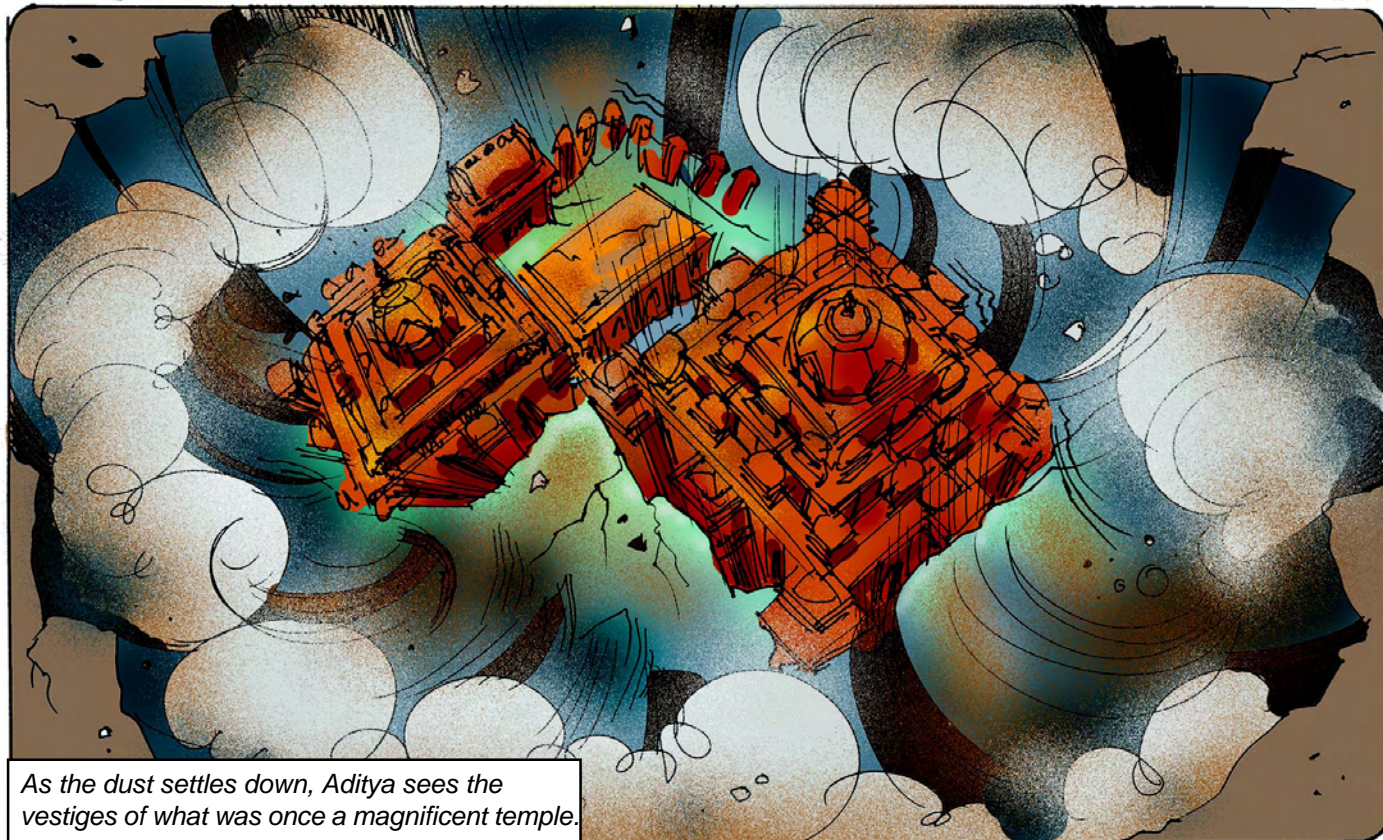
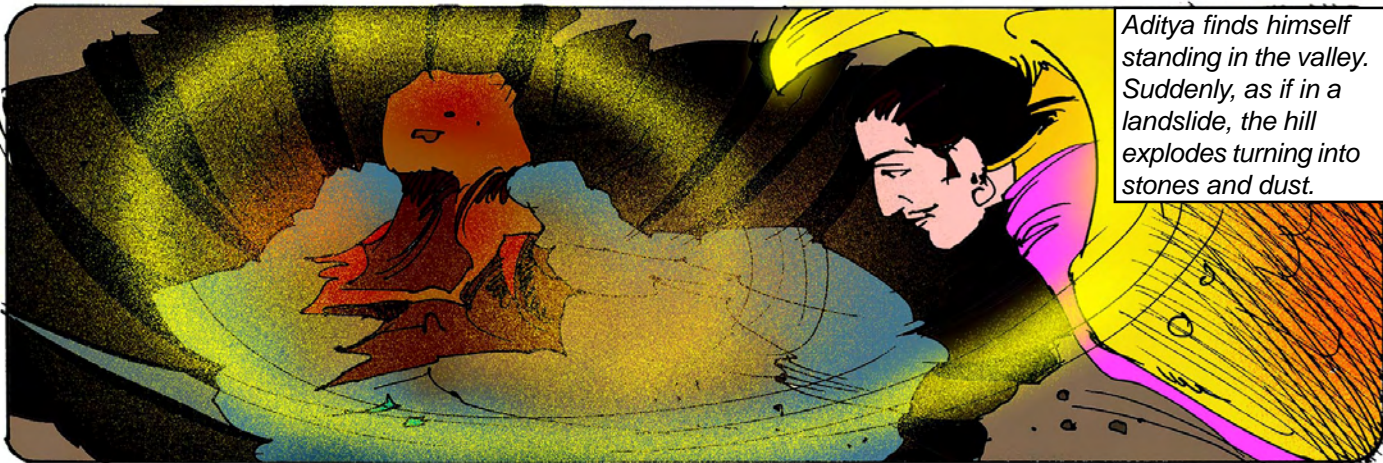
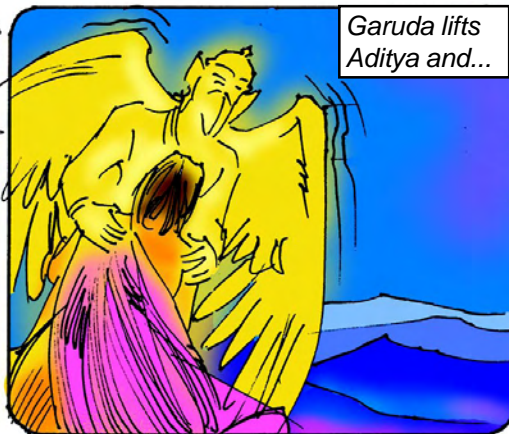
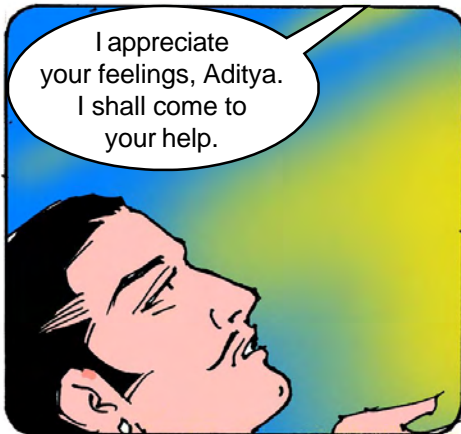


O divine one, please tell me, will I have the support of the divine to carry out that mission?

That is why I saved you from Vajrapuri and brought you here.



It's impossible for a lone human being to clear the place unless some divine power blesses me.

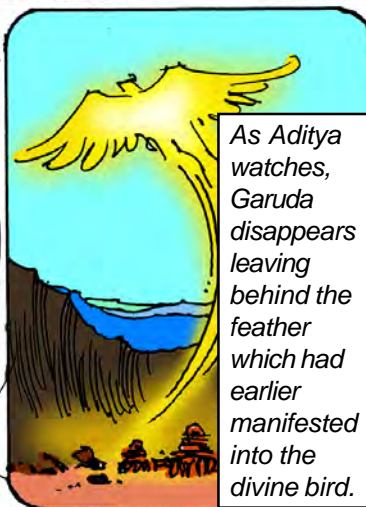


Everything appears like in a miracle. Aditya is wonderstruck.



He hears the now familiar voice.

It's now for you to carry out what has been ordained on you.



As Aditya watches, Garuda disappears leaving behind the feather which had earlier manifested into the divine bird.

Aditya's attention is drawn by shouts from people.

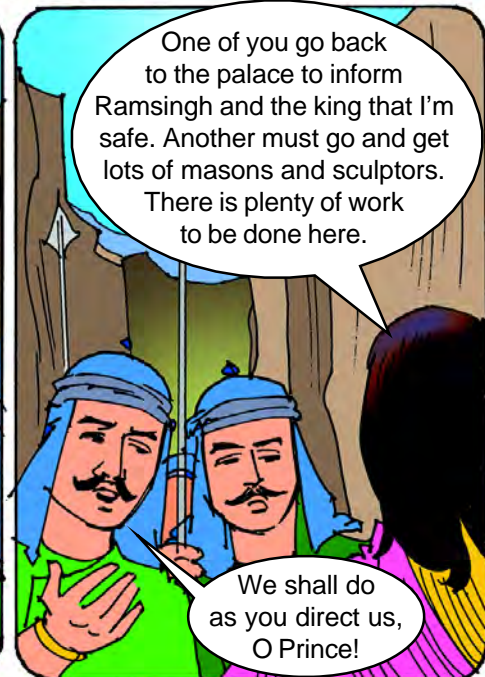


Our prince is already here! He's safe!



How did you all happen to come here?

Ramsingh sent us to reach here by the time you arrived. We took a whole day to find this place.



One of you go back to the palace to inform Ramsingh and the king that I'm safe. Another must go and get lots of masons and sculptors. There is plenty of work to be done here.

We shall do as you direct us, O Prince!

Aditya and all those who are left there go round the temple.



Contd.

# GO TO GOA FOR CARNIVAL

**T**wo months in preparation, the most important festival of Goa is called "Carnival", which takes place in mid-February.

There are different meanings to the word, but the popular belief is that it came from 'Carrus Navalis', which is a boat-shaped carriage, horse-drawn, carrying revellers—men and women—in fancy dresses and wearing masks, singing bawdy songs which sometimes may raise eyebrows! But the whole thing is fun and frolic and lasts three days before Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent—a solemn period of penance and abstinence leading to Easter.

A King of Chaos is elected and he is called King Momo—a Portuguese tradition. He declares: "I, King Momo, hereby forbid anyone in the kingdom of Goa from doing anything sensible during the Carnival!"

You can imagine how his subjects will respond to someone who presumably loves fun! There is music, dance, colour and contests like mock battles.

Battles are waged with such "ammunition" as plaster-of-Paris eggs, wax lemons, corncobs and beans, besides sand-filled gloves, mud, dirty water, coloured liquids and glue. Prizes are awarded by King Momo.

Once upon a time, Carnival had no spectators, and it was strictly for participants. From dawn to dusk and back to dawn again, they sang and danced, changed costumes and partners. Those who fell in love during Carnival waited till Easter to get married.

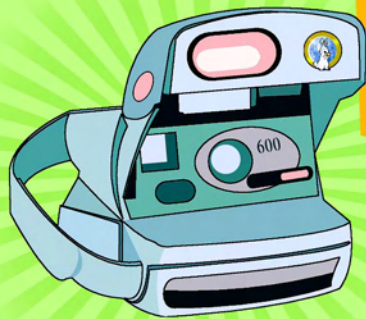
The Goa Carnival is an integral part of the Portuguese heritage of the State which came into being in 1961. The festival nowadays has no religious significance and has become a cultural highlight of the State.



## STORY OF KRISHNA

The series "Glimpses of Devi Bhagavatam" concludes in this issue. For stories from Mythology, we propose to run the "Story of Krishna" from the March 2007 issue. Ensure your copy with your news vendor.

**-Editor**



# Photo Caption

You may write it on a post card marking it:

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## OBSERVING SPEED LIMIT

**O**f late, Ravi started suffering from frequent headaches and blurred vision. So, he went to a doctor. After a thorough examination, the doctor told him that he had a high blood pressure and after prescribing some tablets, he advised him to reduce the salt intake in his diet. In his anxiety to get cured, Ravi reduced the salt intake drastically. Within one month, his B.P. became normal, but he suffered weakness of limbs and cramps.

After examining him, the doctor said, "You've gone to the other extreme. You should not have

reduced salt drastically. Just as too much of salt would cause hypertension, too less of it would also cause serious problems. Salt is a must in your diet and it should be used within certain limits."

This applies to the speed of automobiles as well. A car or two-wheeler is designed to operate at maximum fuel efficiency, generally at speeds ranging from 40 to 50 kmph as specified by the individual vehicle manufacturer. Driving at lower speeds would straightaway increase the oil consumption.

Driving at higher speeds would increase the frictional losses in the engine and consequently increase the oil consumption. Either way, it affects fuel efficiency. The prudent thing is to choose the route which would enable the motorist to drive within the specified speed limits. Again, the above speed range can be achieved with minimum oil consumption only when one drives at top gear. If each motorist would choose a less congested route to reach his destination, enabling him to drive at top gear within the specified speed limits, it would go a long way in saving precious petrol, for the nation as a whole.

*Let's paint a better world*



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save  
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